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BOWLES, BYRON AND THE
POPE-CONTROVERSY

BOWLES, BYRON AND THE POPE-CONTROVERSY

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT TER VERKRIJGING
VAN DEN GRAAD VAN DOCTOR IN DE LETTEREN
EN WIJSBEGEERTE AAN DE UNIVERSITEIT VAN
AMSTERDAM, OP GEZAG VAN DEN RECTOR-MAG-
NIFICUS DR H. BRUGMANS, HOOGLEERAAR IN DE
FACULTEIT DER LETTEREN EN WIJSBEGEERTE, IN
HET OPENBAAR TE VERDEDIGEN IN DE AULA DER
UNIVERSITEIT OP DONDERDAG 5 MEI 1927, DES
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H. J. PARIS
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**AAN MIJNE VROUW
EN MIJNE KINDEREN**

Now that the last proof-sheets are before me, I feel that my book ought not to go into the world without bearing on its pages the expression of my sincere gratitude to those who are in any way connected with it.

I am indebted to prof. dr. A. E. H. Swaen for much kindness and encouragement. In spite of the enormous amount of work which has passed through his hands during the last four or five years, I have never appealed to him for help in vain.

At this moment my thoughts naturally go back to the past, to the many pleasant hours I spent with prof. dr. P. Fijn van Draat and Mr. M. G. van Neck who guided my first steps in the study of English, and whose lessons I still remember gratefully.

My thanks are due also to the authorities of the British Museum, especially to Mr. Arundell Esdaile, who was always ready to help me, during my stay in London in the winter of 1924, and who has rendered me many a kind service since then.

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE CONTROVERSY

In 1806 the Rev. William Lisle Bowles, rector of Bremhill, in Wiltshire, a sonneteer of no mean deserts, edited an edition of Pope's works, which led to the controversy that forms the subject of this treatise. Bowles was educated first at Winchester school under Joseph Warton, who was also editor of an edition of Pope's works; and afterwards at Trinity College, Oxford, where the younger brother of Joseph Warton, Thomas, was professor of poetry¹. Thomas Warton's sonnets, some of which were considered by Hazlitt the finest in the language seem to have caught the fancy of Coleridge and Bowles.

In his edition of Pope's Works Bowles criticised rather severely both the moral and the poetical character of Pope. Lord Byron was the first to protest against Bowles's criticism of Pope's morals, in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* ll. 327—384:

"Hail, Sympathy! thy soft idea brings
A thousand visions of a thousand things,
And shows, still whimpering through threescore of years,
The maudlin prince of mournful sonneteers.
And art thou not their prince, harmonious Bowles!
Thou first, great oracle of tender souls?
Whether thou singest with equal ease, and grief,

¹ In his *Final appeal to the Literary Public*, etc, 1825, Bowles says: The poetry, be it what it may, I learned in that academia, where also, I learned these principles of criticism, which I have here supported and which I have no fear as to being "set at rest" by Lord Byron, Mr. Roscoe, or any one, believing them to be as invariable as nature, as eternal as truth.

The fall of empires, or a yellow leaf;
 Whether thy muse most lamentably tells
 What merry sounds proceed from Oxford bells,
 Or, still in bells delighting, finds a friend
 In every chime that jingled from Ostend;
 Ah! how much juster were thy Muse's hap,
 If to thy bells thou wouldst but add a 'cap!
 Delightful Bowles! still blessing and still blest,
 All love thy strain, but children like it best.
 'Tis thine, with gentle Little's moral song,
 To soothe the mania of the amorous throng!
 With thee our nursery damsels shed their tears,
 Ere Miss as yet completes her infant years:
 But in her teens thy whining powers are vain;
 She quits poor Bowles for Little's purer strain.
 Now to soft themes thou scornest to confine
 The lofty numbers of a harp like thine;
 "Awake a louder and a loftier strain",
 Such as none heard before, or will again!
 Where all discoveries jumbled from the flood¹.
 Since first the leaky ark reposed in mud,
 By more or less, are sung in every book,
 From Captain Noah down to Captain Cook.
 Nor this alone — but, pausing on the road,
 The Bard sighs forth a gentle episode,
 And gravely tells — attend, each beauteous Miss!
*When first Madeira trembled to a kiss.*²
 Bowles! in thy memory let this precept dwell,
 Stick to thy Sonnets, Man! — at least they sell.
 But if some new-born whim, or larger bribe,
 Prompt thy crude brain, and claim thee for a scribe:
 If chance some bard, though once by dunces feared,
 Now, prone in dust, can only be revered;
 If Pope, whose fame and genius, from the first,
 Have foiled the best of critics, needs the worst,
 Do thou essay: each fault, each failing scan;
 The first of poets was, alas! but man.
 Rake from each ancient dunghill every pearl,

¹ A reference to Bowles's: *The Spirit of Discovery at Sea*. 1804.

² The episode alluded to is the story of *Robert à Machin* and *Anna d'Arfet* a pair of constant lovers, who performed the kiss above mentioned, that startled the woods of Madeira. (See Byron's Letter to Murray on Bowles' strictures.)

Consult Lord Fanny¹, and confide in Curl²;
 Let all the scandals of a former age
 Perch on thy pen, and flutter o'er thy page;
 Affect a candour which thou canst not feel,
 Clothe envy in the garb of honest zeal;
 Write, as if St. John's soul could still inspire
 And do from hate what Mallet³ did for hire.
 Oh! hadst thou lived in that congenial time,
 To rave with Dennis, and with Ralph⁴ to rhyme;
 Thronged with the rest around his living head,
 Not raised thy hoof against the lion dead,
 A meet reward had crowned thy glorious gains,
 And linked thee to the Dunciad for thy pains."

In 1816 Byron wrote: "Too savage all this on Bowles"; but on Febr. 7. 1821, he says: "Although I regret having published *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, the part which I regret the least is that which regards Mr. B. with reference to Pope, and of Mr. B.'s opinion of his works, etc.⁵. In the first edition of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* the lines on Bowles and his edition of Pope were supplied by Mr. Hobhouse. They were the following:

"Stick to thy sonnets, man! — at least they sell.
 Or take the only path that open lies
 For modern worthies who would hope to rise:
 Fix on some well-known name, and, bit by bit,
 Pare off the merits of his worth and wit:
 On each alike employ the critic's knife,
 And when a comment fails, prefix a life;
 Hint certain failings, faults before unknown,
 Review forgotten lies, and add your own;
 Let no disease, let no misfortune 'scape
 And print, if luckily deformed, his shape:
 Thus shall the world, quite undeceived at last,

¹ Poetical name of Lord Hervey, author of *Lines to the Imitator of Horace*.

² A bookseller, one of the heroes of the Dunciad.

³ Mallet was hired by Lord Bolingbroke to traduce Pope after his decease.

⁴ Dennis, the critic; Ralph, the poet.

⁵ See Prothero's edition of Lord Byron's Letters and Journals, vol. V, p.

Cleave to their present wits, and quit their past;
 Bards once revered no more with favour view,
 But give their modern sonneteers their due;
 Thus with the dead may living merit cope,
 Thus Bowles may triumph o'er the shade of Pope."

"On reprinting the work, as I put my name to it," says Byron, "I omitted Mr. Hobhouse's lines, by which the work gained less than Mr. Bowles. I am grieved to say that, in reading over those lines, I repent of their having so far fallen short of what I meant to express upon the subject of his edition of Pope's works". As far as Mr. Bowles's "gain" is concerned, I think, opinions may differ. Byron seems to me unusually modest here¹. However this may be, here the matter between Mr. Bowles and Lord Byron rested; and it was not till many years after that Byron found an opportunity to take part in the controversy to which Bowles's edition of Pope gave rise.

In 1819 appeared Thomas Campbell's *Specimens of the British poets* in 7 volumes, and in vol. I, pp. 260—271 he championed Pope as a poet.

This defence of Pope's poetical character started a war of pamphlets, which with an interval of about two years went on till 1826, Bowles answered in his *Invariable Principles of Poetry, in a letter addressed to Thomas Campbell Esq. occasioned by some critical observations in his specimens of British Poetry, particularly relating to the poetical character of Pope.*" (Published at Bath, 1819).

On these "invariable" principles he was attacked in the *Quarterly Review* for July 1820 in an article nominally written as a review of *Spence's Anecdotes of Books and Men*. In this article Bowles's principles are held up to ridicule, while he is severely condemned for his criticism of Pope's moral character.

¹ W. Roscoe in his *Letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles*, after quoting the sentence beginning: "I am grieved to say that", says: "Yet these lines may be considered as no slight castigation."

In the style and method of the review of *Spence's Anecdotes*, Bowles thought he recognised the hand of Octavius Graham Gilchrist, a grocer at Stamford and contributor to different magazines, who had defended Pope's moral character anonymously (also in a review of *Spence's Anecdotes*), in the *London Magazine* for February 1820, and had acknowledged the authorship in the same periodical July, 1821. [?] 1820

In this mistaken notion Bowles rather hastily took up his pen and replied in *A Reply to an unsentimental sort of critic, the reviewer of Spence's Anecdotes in the Quarterly Review* for October Otherwise to the Longinus of "in-door" nature

by

One of the family of the Bowleses.

Bath 1820.

The motto under which this reply was published was

*Come, let me flap this bug!*¹

How the tone in which the controversy was carried on deteriorated into that of coarse, vulgar abuse we shall see in the next chapter. Very soon after the appearance of this reply, Bowles published another one: *A Reply to the Charges brought by the reviewer of Spence's Anecdotes in the Quarterly Review* for October² 1820 against the last editor of *Pope's Works* and author of a letter to Mr. Campbell on the *Invariable Principles of Poetry*³ (dated

¹ See Pope's *Epistle to Arbuthnot*:

Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings,
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:
etc.

² The article in question appeared in the *Quarterly Review* (July 1820).

³ A second edition of this Reply appeared afterwards under the title of *A Vindication of the late edition of Pope's works from some charges brought against him by a writer in the Quarterly for October 1820.*"

Bremhill October 14th 1820). Meanwhile the article in the *Quarterly Review*, which, by the way, owed its existence not to Octavius Gilchrist but to Isaac Disraeli, had also reached Lord Byron¹. And as his name was mentioned and Bowles's account was quoted of Byron's misquotation of certain lines in *the Spirit of Discovery*, Byron did not hesitate to join in the fight. He wrote his *Letter to ***** [John Murray], Esqre, on the Rev. W. L. Bowles's Strictures on the Life and writings of Pope*. (Ravenna February 7th, 1821) and his *Observations upon Observations. A second letter to John Murray, Esq., on the Rev. W. L. Bowles's Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope*. (Ravenna, March 25th, 1821). Only the first letter was published, the second not appearing till 1835².

Of course Bowles was not long in replying. He wrote *Two letters to the Right Honourable Lord Byron in answer to his Lordship's letter to **** on the Rev. W. L. Bowles's strictures on the Life and writings of Pope, more particularly on the question, whether poetry be more immediately indebted to what is sublime or beautiful in the works of nature or the works of art*.

The controversy between Bowles and Byron ended with the publication of this pamphlet.

Meanwhile Octavius Graham Gilchrist, who had been so rudely attacked by the Rev. W. L. Bowles, on his supposed authorship of the review of Spence's *Anecdotes* in the *Quarterly Review*, had taken up arms in defence, and penned a pamphlet: *A Letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles in answer to a pamphlet recently published under the title of A Reply to an unsenti-*

¹ From the first lines of Byron's first letter on the Rev. W. L. Bowles's *Strictures* etc. we see that John Murray sent Byron the different pamphlets on the Pope and Bowles Controversy.

² Byron writes to John Murray (Ravenna May 10, 1821) "Of course, after the new tone of Mr. B. you will *not* publish my defence of Gilchrist (i. e. the second letter to John Murray.): it would be brutal to do so after his urbanity, for it is rather too rough, like his own attack upon G.

mental sort of critic, the reviewer of *Spence's Anecdotes* in the *Quarterly Review* for October 1820 by

Octavius Gilchrist Esq. F. S. A.¹

Stamford, Dec. 2, 1820. (Printed by John Drakard, Stamford). To be fair we should point out, that even before the review of *Spence's Anecdotes* appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, Gilchrist had given his opinion of Bowles's edition of Pope's work in the *London Magazine* for Febr. 1820 (see p. 5). The following passage shows in what style it was written: "These testimonies to the worth and virtue of the poet, not consorting with the purpose of Mr. Bowles, he has preferred the representations of his (the poet's) enemies; and having, with an obliquity unexampled in an editor, resolved to asperse the moral reputation of his author, it was necessary that he should affect to sneer at the friendly representations of a chronicler, actuated by feelings so unlike his own! The general defamation of Pope's character, Mr. Bowles shares with Curl, Gildon; Welstead and Weston etc., but the inquisition which he has instituted into the poet's attachment to Martha Blount, is eminently his own, though the pruriency with which his nose is laid to the ground, to scent some taint in their connection, and the anatomical minuteness with which he examines and determines on the physical constitution of Pope, might, in charity, be deemed only seemly to a layman, and occasional critic; in an editor, and a clergyman, such conduct appears to us indecent, and insufferably disgusting."

His opponents leaving him no rest, poor Mr. Bowles had a very busy time. His next hit was *Observations on the poetical character of Pope, further elucidating the Invariable Principles*

¹ This letter is referred to by Lord Byron in his first letter to Murray: "Mr. Octavius Gilchrist speaks rather irreverently of a second tumbler of hot white-wine negus." etc.

of Poetry; with a sequel in reply to Octavius Gilchrist, which appeared in the Pamphleteer¹.

Referring to the article in the London Magazine just quoted, Bowles writes: "I was in hopes, that even Mr. Gilchrist might be disposed to a more amicable mode of discussing what I have advanced in regard to Pope's moral character. But I have since read a publication by him containing such vulgar slander, affecting my private life and character that I am obliged to set before the public the mode of Christian criticism, of which, I believe, he has set the first example in Europe." Besides this first reply Gilchrist wrote *A second letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles in answer to his second reply* (printed in the 33rd number of the Pamphleteer) to the Reviewer of Spence's Anecdotes in the *Quarterly Review* for October 1820; and *A third letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles concerning Pope's moral character; including some observations on that person's demeanour towards his opponents during the recent controversy on that subject*, 1821.

That some interest was taken in the controversy that was going on, is shown by a number of long and short articles, editorial notes, readers' letters etc. in the various literary periodicals of the time. In the *Gentlemen's Magazine* for Dec. 1820 for instance we find a short letter from Verax on the question of Bowles's unfortunate utterance that Lady Mary W. Montague's behaviour might have made Pope think that he might proceed "a step beyond decorum".

In the same magazine we find in April 1821 an anonymous article by a writer who defends Bowles against his opponents with the greatest determination. Without entering into details in this chapter, I must draw the reader's attention to a certain passage which this article contains, and which seems to me to be of importance to the history of the controversy. After

¹ Vol. XVII no. XXXIV, 1820, p.p. 369/384; continued in vol. XVIII, no. XXXV, pp. 213/258.

having spoken about Thomas Campbell and Lord Byron, the writer continues: "More serious causes of complaint Mr. Bowles had against the *Quarterly Review* and a writer in the *London Magazine*. This latter gentleman attacks him in such scurrilous terms as we hardly ever remember to have met with in the annals of criticism; and we cannot but believe he has made a considerable sacrifice of his dignity in vouchsafing a reply to this writer.

The article in the *Quarterly Review* refers several serious charges against the character of Pope to Mr. Bowles, which Bowles distinctly proves never to have originated with him. It seems to have been gotten up with infinite labour for the express purpose of prejudicing his edition of Pope's works in order to prepare the way for a new one (probably by the author of the critique), which we are advised is now preparing for publication." The three new editions of Pope's works to which this may refer, are:

1821 *The Poetical Works of Al. Pope* complete in two volumes to which is prefixed the life of the author. (No editor named)

T. M'LEAN, London

1822 *The Poetical Works of Pope*. 2 vol. J. Bumpus London (a new edition of Joseph Warton's work)

1824 *The works of Al. Pope* with notes and ill. by himself and others, to which are added a new life of the author and occasional remarks by W. Roscoe.

As the two first named are inferior editions of Pope's works, there is a probability that the edition referred to by the anonymous writer in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* is the last named. Moreover, on p. 577 of Roscoe's *Life of Pope*, the editor says, speaking of Pope's friendship for Martha Blount:

"Attempts have been made, however, to impress the public with the idea that the connexion which subsisted for so many

years between Pope and Martha Blount was of a criminal nature. Many facts, says his last editor (Bowles) etc."

This word last seems to prove that Roscoe's edition was meant¹. And as we shall see, after an interval of about two years the controversy was revived on the appearance of Roscoe's Edition.

In the New Monthly Magazine for Nov. 1820 a short memoir of the Rev. W. L. Bowles appears with a portrait. A small part of this memoir is devoted to the controversy. It is stated that it appears from his pamphlets that he is well able to defend his opinions; and has supported them by reasons which are not likely to be refuted. "It is our firm conviction that it was very remote from his intention to lower either the poetical or the moral character of Pope," etc.

The most interesting and elaborate article that appeared on the controversy was from the pen of W. Hazlitt. In the London Magazine for June 1821 he wrote an article entitled *Pope, Lord Byron and Mr. Bowles*. It is by far the best article written on this subject, and moreover, one of the very few articles that deal almost exclusively with the literary side of the question: the poetical character of Pope. In it W. Hazlitt takes the part of Mr. Bowles: "In truth," he says, "his Lordship has the worst of this controversy, though he throws out a number of pert, smart, flashy things, with the air of a man who sees company on subjects of taste, while his reverend antagonist, who is the better critic and logician of the two, goes prosing on in a tone of obsequious pertinacity and sore pleasantry, as if he were sitting (an unwelcome guest) at his Lordship's table and were awed yet galled, by the cavalier assumption of patrician manners."

"As Jen Belcher, when asked, if he did not feel a little awkward

¹ A letter from Disraeli to Byron dated 19 July 1822 contains the following: "Pope has regained his due ascendancy; — a new edition is preparing by an Editor who I suspect as inept for that office as Bowles — Mr. Roscoe!"

at facing Gamble, the tall Irishman, made answer: "An please ye, Sir, when I am stript to my shirt, I am afraid of no man", so we would advise Mr. Bowles, in a question of naked argument, to fear no man, and let no man bite his thumbs at him." Hazlitt, at least, is not afraid of his Lordship. In his first letter to John Murray (Letters and Journals, vol. 5, p. 554 John Murray's Ed. of B.'s works) Byron says: "It is the fashion of the day to lay great stress upon what they call "imagination" and "invention", the two commonest of qualities: an Irish peasant with a little whisky in his head will imagine and invent more than would furnish forth a modern poem." "The two commonest of qualities", says Hazlitt. "We will tell his Lordship what is commoner: the want of them." He will not dispute what the Irishman would imagine and invent. "But at any rate," he continues, "when sober the next morning, he would be as full of wise saws and modern instances as his Lordship; and in either case equally positive, tetchy and absurd! His Lordship, throughout his pamphlet, makes a point of contradicting Mr. Bowles, and, it would seem, of contradicting himself. He cannot be said to have any opinions of his own, but whatever any one else advances, he denies out of mere spleen and rashness" etc.

Another attack upon Bowles's invariable principles appeared in the *Pamphleteer* No. 39/40 1822: *A letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles in reply to his letter to Thomas Campbell Esq. and to his two letters to the Right Hon. Lord Byron, containing a vindication of their defence of the poetical character of Pope and an inquiry into the nature of poetical images and of the characteristic qualities that distinguish poetry from all other species of writing* by M. M'Dermot. London 1822. This article was reviewed in the *New Monthly Magazine* (of which Thomas Campbell was the editor) probably by Campbell himself (March 1, 1822); upon which Mr. Bowles wrote *an address to Thomas Campbell Esq., editor of the New Monthly Magazine*,

in consequence of an article in that publication (dated Bremhill March 14 1822). And then, at last, Mr. Bowles's pen was allowed to rest, though, as we shall see, the last word had not been written in this controversy.

In 1824 W. Roscoe's edition of Pope's works appeared with a new life of the author, in which Bowles's observations on Pope's moral and poetical character were severely censured. Nobody would of course have expected Bowles to preserve silence after this new attack; nor did the title of the pamphlet he produced inveigle those who had followed the controversy so far, into the belief that it would really be Bowles's last word on the matter. *A final appeal to the literary public relative to Pope in reply to certain observations of Mr. Roscoe in his edition of that poet's works, to which are added some remarks on Lord Byron's conversations as far as they relate to the same subject and the author (In letters to a literary friend)* was indeed destined not to be final. In it Bowles adopted a new mode of discussion. At Bowles's request a friend of his sends him a few extracts from Roscoe's Life of Pope, in various letters, dated from Bath. That Bowles's prolixity had not deserted him appears in letter XII, when after a hundred pages of print the writer quietly begins:

My dear Sir,

Having thus discussed preliminaries etc.

In the last letter (XVI) dated Nov. 5th 1824 Bowles refers to "a late illustrious antagonist now no more, and his conversations." This series of letters (in which Bowles had lost nothing of his rudeness in discussion and his 'damnable iteration'), drew after it a reply from W. Roscoe in *A letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles A. M. Prebendary of Sarum, Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and former editor of Pope's works in ten volumes, in reply to his "Final appeal to the literary public relative to Pope" by William Roscoe Esq. London 1825*, in which Bowles is taken to task for the very extraordinary manner in which he has thought proper to carry on the literary controversies in which he has

been engaged, and "in which", Roscoe says, "you seem much more desirous of contributing to the amusement of your reader at the expense of your opponent, than of discussing the question before you on its real merits."

At about the same time there appeared in the *Quarterly Review* no. LXIV, an article by a very confident writer, who though evidently an admirer of Pope comes to the same conclusion as Bowles, as we shall see below.

"To us, lovers of the good old stock poetry of England," he writes, "this is a pleasant sight. Three voluminous editions of Pope within the present century; two of them within the last three years (he refers to a new edition of Joseph Warton's work in 1822, and to W. Roscoe's edition); and the great luminary himself attended by a long scintillating train of controversialists, commentators, annotators, editors and biographers. "There is evidently a confidence felt by all these, that the public taste is beginning to be satiated with the forced meats of modern poetry, and to relish again the wholesome viands that delighted our fathers, and are destined to be the delight of all future generations." Notwithstanding this enthusiasm, however, he comes in the course of his article to the same conclusion to which Bowles's invariable principles led him. "It is therefore high, perhaps the very highest in the second class, that we rank the poetic genius of Pope." No wonder that with a decided note of triumph, Bowles, after having answered Roscoe in his *Lessons in Criticism to W. Roscoe Esq.* pens his last (and the last) pamphlet in the controversy: "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander!" being an answer to an article in the *Quarterly Review* as far as it concerns Mr. Bowles's Edition of Pope and his view of that poet's character."

"And so we come precisely to the same conclusion at last! My "invariable principles" have weathered every storm, and have arrived safely in port! They ought to have three cheers; for, I believe, it has been owing to them that the question rela-

ting to Pope's supremacy in his art has taken tangible and definite shape. Pope's rank is now acknowledged; and the critic has "degraded" him as much as I did, in assigning him exactly the same station. He stands the First in the second class. This is all I ever contended for."

Bowles survived this war of pamphlets and all of his antagonists (and with them most of the surviving Pope-idolators) a good many years, dying in 1850, only leaving the battle-field, we may be sure, for lack of opponents¹.

¹) William Lisle Bowles was born in King's Sutton, and baptized there on the 25th of September 1762.

CHAPTER II

THE CONTROVERSY AS FAR AS POPE'S MORAL CHARACTER IS CONCERNED. THE TONE IN WHICH THE CONTROVERSY IS CARRIED ON.

In the "advertisement" to Bowles's edition of Pope's works the following passage draws the attention:

"Some original papers have been for obvious reasons, omitted. Those which have been published I do not think can detract from the moral character of the writer. What man, indeed, if all the errors of his youth were severely scanned, could escape censure? In other respects, the letters are natural, interesting and creditable to his feelings. Among the omissions I now sincerely wish I had included the farce of "Three hours after marriage"; but it was printed, when I was afflicted with illness, and was scarcely able to judge for myself. I think it right to express my sorrow though too late; the rest I leave to the candour of the public" ¹.

And towards the end of his observations on the poet's moral character: "If these and other parts of his character appear less amiable, let the reader constantly keep in mind the physical

¹ In his reply to Bowles's *Final Appeal* W. Roscoe says: "Mr. Bowles had probably forgotten, when he made this apology, that he had before not only recognised the publishing, but had stated the *particular reasons* which had induced him to lay it before the public, as follows: — "Pope was certainly as much concerned in writing this farce as he was in writing *The Memoirs of Scriblerus*; it was a joint production; though it is unworthy the names of its authors; yet, as so much has been said of it, and as it was the cause of the memorable quarrel of Pope with Cibber, *I have thought it might gratify curiosity, if I gave it a place.*" Pope's Works vol. X, p. 245 Bowles's Edition.

and moral causes which operated on a mind like his: let him remember his life, "one long disease", the natural passions, which he must have felt in common with all the world, disappointed: his tenderness thrown back on his heart, only to gather there with more force, and more ineffectual wishes: his confined education, intrusted chiefly to those who were themselves narrow-minded, his being used from the cradle to listen only to the voice of partial indulgence; of tenderness, almost maternal, in all who contemplated his weakness and his incipient talents.

When he has duly weighed these things, and attended to every alleviating circumstance that this knowledge of the world, or his charity, may suggest, then let him not hastily condemn what truth compels me to state; but let him rather, without presuming on his own virtues, lament the imperfection of our common nature and leave the judgment to Him "who knoweth" whereof we are made, who remembereth we are but dust".

There is a very peculiar contradiction in what the Rev. Bowles writes in the advertisement, and the observations he makes on Pope's moral character. In his edition he leaves out some original papers, because obviously they "detract from the moral character of the writer"; and yet there is no denying that his strictures on Pope's moral character are pretty severe. And then, after having drawn the reader's attention to faults, (and worse than faults) the existence of which he fails to prove, he warns him not to condemn the poet too hastily, pleading moral and physical causes and a confined education in favour of Pope.

The chief points on which he is attacked are the following:

Pope's alleged duplicity, his corruptibility, his love of money, his licentiousness in love, and his conduct towards Lady Mary Wortley Montague, and towards Addison. After speaking of Pope "contriving to promulgate his private letters that he might shew how amiable he was in private life, as well as superior in talents" Bowles continues: "This duplicity, which in the first

instance was caused by vanity became by degrees habitual. On all occasions, when attacked, he almost instinctively resorted to it. He never seemed inclined to speak "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

Isaac d'Israëli in his review of *Spence's Anecdotes* in the *Quarterly Review* for July 1820 says: "It is with pain we have so long witnessed the attacks on the moral and poetical character of this great poet (Pope) by the last two of his editors. Warton, who first entered the list, though not unwilling to wound, exhibits occasionally some of the courtesy of the ancient chivalry, but his successor, the Rev. Mr. Bowles, pushes the contest à l'outrance, with the appearance, though assuredly not with the reality, of personal hostility. It had been more honourable in this gentleman, with his known prejudices against the class of Poetry, in which Pope will always remain unrivalled, to have declined the office of editor, than to attempt to spread among new generations of readers the most unfavourable and the most unjust impressions of the Poet, and of the man." d'Israëli accuses Bowles of "surmising away every amiable characteristic of the poet; and, incredible as it may appear, accusing him of the contrary dispositions." The reviewer of *Spence's Anecdotes* calls upon his readers to believe that Pope was kind from his nature, that his heart was open at all times to the claims of his humbler friends, that he was adored by his intimates, that he could have no one to envy, and finally that he was no lover of money. And he goes on to prove these statements from words spoken or written by Pope. "But", he says, "whenever the poet expresses any amiable feeling Mr. Bowles writes a note to inform us that 'he fears that Pope's feelings were the reverse of what he professed!' This is the very black art of criticism — reading the Lord's Prayer backwards!"

Disraëli quotes several examples of Pope's kindness to relations and friends: a settlement of £ 50 a year upon a nephew, who did not want to accept a situation in the West-Indies; a

pension paid to Savage, when he was destitute and deserted by every one. He also mentions what Spence (who knew both Lady Mary and Pope) writes to his mother about Lady Mary's peculiar character and her irregularity of temper, but he is especially indignant at the elaborate charge urged against Pope by Mr. Bowles, relating to his conduct towards Addison. He quotes many proofs of Addison's hostility towards Pope: Dean Lockier speaking of Pope's character of Addison, says: "Addison deserved that character the most of any man."

Dr. Leigh to Spence: "Mr. Addison was not a good-natured man and was very jealous of rivals."

Cibber confirmed to Spence "Addison's character of bearing no rival and enduring none but flatterers".

Also Bowles's reviving Horace Walpole's story of Pope having accepted a bribe of £ 1000 from the Duchess of Marlborough, is animadverted on by Disraëli, who again adduces *Spence's Anecdotes* as evidence: "Mr. Pope was offered a very considerable sum by the Duchess of Marlborough, if he would have inserted a good character of the Duke, and he absolutely refused it." And again: "Mr. Pope never flattered anybody for money in the whole course of his writing. He (Mr. Pope) never would comply with the baseness of saying some flattering things about alderman Barber for money (£ 5000)."

And Martha Blount herself says: "Mr. Pope's not being richer, may be easily accounted for: he never had any love for money."

On the whole the article in the *Quarterly Review* is kept in the proper tone. Naturally a few things are said which Bowles did not like, but the way in which they were said was not ungentlemanly; and when Bowles in his hastily written *Reply to an unsentimental sort of critic*, etc. finds fault with Gifford for not having "pruned some of the exuberances of this coarse and insulting critic's sarcastic spleen, for the sake of his generally

excellent Review" ¹, the reverend gentleman — to say the least of it — stands guilty of gross exaggeration. And it was most unwarrantable in him to write what he did write on Gilchrist's supposed authorship of the article in the *Quarterly Review*. It is true he had every reason to be exasperated. The attack by Gilchrist in the *London Magazine* (Febr. 1820) was most unsavoury and contained a very coarse image. But Bowles should have thought twice, before he retorted as he did to the article in the *Quarterly Review*. My opinion is that the Rev. W. L. Bowles is, even more than Gilchrist, answerable for the coarse tone in which the controversy is carried on. Mr. Gilchrist was a grocer at Stamford. Let us see what Bowles thinks fit to say: "In his shop, then, let this Reviewer, this lover of the sublime and beautiful of in-door nature, indulge his own poetical and romantic reveries, till the pipe in his own mouth becomes, in his glowing imagination, that of Theocritus; the old ledger-book, the Georgicks of Virgil; a grove of green canisters, a grove of green trees; the dingy shop-boy, a shepherd of Arcadia; and a lake of brown treacle, in half a hogshead by the window, more enchanting to the view than the lakes of Cumberland, with their mountains and woods shining to the glorious sunset! etc., etc."

He offers apologies beforehand for any coarser manner in his reply: "I hope I shall be excused, if, in repelling sneers and sarcasms, I use a somewhat coarser manner in reply than is either consonant to the habits or dispositions of our family."

As W. Roscoe says afterwards (1825) in his *Letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles*, the manner in which this gentleman thought proper to carry on the literary controversies in which he was engaged, was very extraordinary (and "he seemed much more

¹ Lord Byron in a Post scriptum to his first letter says: Now it seems to me the more impartial, that notwithstanding that the great writer of the *Quarterly* entertains opinions opposite to the able article on Spence, nevertheless that essay was permitted to appear. Is a review to be devoted to the opinions of any one man? etc.

desirous of contributing to the amusement of his readers at the expense of his opponent than of discussing the question before him on its real merits," Roscoe adds).

Gilchrist proves himself a match for this clerical opponent, and often betrays a lack of delicacy. In his letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles in answer to "*a reply to an unsentimental sort of critic*," we find f. i.

"The difficulty of pleasing the gentleman — for so, he assures us, he is — a trifling literary anecdote will show. No very long time has elapsed since, in one of our periodical miscellanies, an ingenious writer fancied a pilgrimage of the living poets to the fountain of Aganippe, and in proportion as each was imbued with poetical inspiration the pilgrim was supposed to quaff at the sacred spring. I write altogether from memory, but, as I recollect, Byron was represented as drinking out of an ample goblet; Southey, Scott and Wordsworth in, I know not what proportion; at length came the sonneteer, Mr. W. Lisle Bowles, who was described as repeatedly dipping his little cockleshell into the fons sacra, and retreating therefrom self-satisfied and smiling." A little further on Gilchrist tells Mr. Bowles that the trunk-makers have consumed the whole impression of his life of Pope. Speaking of John Clare's poems, Gilchrist says "we find in his writings no murmurs, no lamentations and wailings, — the loss of a friend or lover does not fill his pages with unmanly querulousness and impatient complainings, etc." And after quoting one of Clare's sonnets: "This, may it please your reverence, is somewhat more poetical and rational than "sighing to the chime of glad bells" over the second tumbler of hot-wine negus!"

And when referring to Bowles's assertion that the editor of the *London Magazine*, Mr. Scott, had written him a letter, which showed "that he (Mr. Scott) had a very different opinion from that entertained by Mr. Gilchrist", Gilchrist defies him to justify this assertion.

"That Mr. Scott disingenuously and secretly "wrote a most obliging letter to you, lest it should be thought such a piece of criticism came from his more forcible and elegant pen", is so totally at variance with his sentiments, personally expressed to myself, that I will not, even on Mr. Bowles's positive declaration, believe it."

Bowles is seen in his full force in *A Reply to the Charges* etc. and even more so in *Observations on the poetical character etc. with a sequel in reply to Oct. Gilchrist*. He maintains the opinions he expressed in his life of Pope, complaining, however, that the reviewer in the *Quarterly Review* heightens words used by Bowles. Where the word "prudence" is used, the reviewer speaks of "aspersing Pope for a sordid moneygetting person", and "jealousy" he turns into "the most rankling envy", an "irritable temper" into "the worst of tempers".

"The whole article," Bowles says, "is written purposely in this manner, and it proves at least that the charges against me of exaggerating "all his failings, stripping him of every amiable quality" are as foul as they are false, when those who make these charges are first obliged to exaggerate, and having so exaggerated, call on the public to remark not what I really have said, but such exaggerations, for which their falsehood is answerable, not my want of candour."

In speaking of Pope's relation to women Bowles had not been fortunate in the use of expressions. In the 7th volume of his edition of Pope he speaks about Lady Mary Wortley Montague giving Pope encouragement, which led him to think "that he might proceed a step farther than decorum would allow", which is interpreted by Gilchrist into "an attempt to commit a rape". And also in his account of the relation between Martha Blount and Pope Bowles appears too much as a judge examiner.

"One part of his character I approach with reluctance, but it is too striking to be passed over: the nature of his attachment

to Martha Blount. Many facts tend to prove the peculiar susceptibility of his passions; nor can we implicitly believe that the connexion between him and Martha Blount was of a nature "so pure and innocent" as his panegyrist Ruffhead would make us believe. But whatever there might be of criminality in the connexion, it did not take place till the "hey-day" of youth was over; that is after the death of her brother (1726), when he was 38 and she 36. Teresa was of the same age with Pope, being born at Paris, 1688. Martha three years younger, was born at Maple Durham 1691. Consequently she was 36 when the connexion between her and Pope became more avowed and explicit. At this time of life there was perhaps no great danger of a "false step". Certainly she became by degrees more indifferent to the opinion of the world. At no time could she have regarded Pope personally with attachment; and when other views were past, she might have acquiesced in her situation, rather than have been gratified by any reciprocities of kindness or affection.

But the most extraordinary circumstance, in regard to his connection with female society, was the strange mixture of indecent and sometimes profane levity, which his conduct and language often exhibited. The cause of this particularity may be sought perhaps in his consciousness of physical defect, which made him affect a character uncongenial and a language opposite to the truth. This levity, to call it by its slightest name I wish to consider, though it is no palliation, as palpable and gross affectation, from which he was in no instance free.

It may seem strange that such language could be endured; but we must consider the character of the times. As to the ladies, they were probably proud (particularly Martha) of the attentions of so celebrated a poet, and allowed the licentiousness of his expressions, that they might boast the honour of his correspondence.

In many instances he appears to have felt a sort of libertine

love, which his passions continually prompted him to declare; but which the consciousness of his infirmities, and we ought to add his moral feelings, corrected and restrained."

These charges seem to have given the admirers of Pope the greatest offense.

I have already quoted a sentence from Gilchrist's article on *Spence's Anecdotes* in the *London Magazine* for February 1820 (see Ch. I, p. 7). Byron in his second letter to John Murray on Bowles's *Strictures on the Life and writings of Pope*, takes the part of Gilchrist against Bowles¹. In his first letter he had already touched upon the relation between Martha Blount and Pope: "Mr. B. says that he "has seen passages in his letters to Martha Blount which were never published by me, and I hope never will be by others; which are so gross as to imply the grossest licentiousness". "Is this fair," Byron asks." It may, or it may not be that such passages exist; and that Pope, who was not a monk, although a Catholic, may have occasionally sinned in word and deed with woman in his youth: but is this sufficient ground for such a sweeping denunciation?... Pope lived in the public eye from his youth upwards; he had all the dunces of his own time for his enemies, and, I am sorry to say, some who have not the apology of dullness for detraction, since his death; and yet to what do all their accumulated hints and charges amount? — to an equivocal liaison with Martha Blount, which might arise as much from his infirmities as from his passions; to a hopeless flirtation with Lady W. Montague; to a story of Cibber's; and to two or three coarse passages in his works². Who could come forth clearer from an invidious

¹ See p. 6 note 2.

² If I were in the humour for story-telling, Byron says, in this part of his letter, I could tell a much better story than Cibber's. This story is found in a letter to John Murray, May 10—1821: After dinner at Lord Lansdowne's they were talking one evening, as Sir Robert Walpole used to talk always. Bowles said that, after all, love was the only thing worthy the risk of damnation.

inquest on a life of fifty-six years?" In his second letter Byron speaking of Gilchrist's article in the *London Magazine* (quoted in one of Bowles's pamphlets) says: "In the long sentence quoted from an article in 'The L. M.' there is one coarse image, the justice of whose application I shall not pretend to determine: — 'The pruriency with which his nose is laid to the ground' is an expression which, whether founded or not, might have been omitted. But the 'anatomical minuteness' appears to me justified even by Mr. B.'s own subsequent quotation."

"To me it appears of no very great consequence whether Martha Blount was or was not Pope's mistress, though I could have wished him a better. She appears to have been a cold-hearted, interested, ignorant, disagreeable woman upon whom the tenderness of Pope's heart in the desolation of his latter days was cast away, not knowing whither to turn as he drew towards his premature old age, childless and lonely, — like the needle which, approaching within a certain distance of the pole, becomes helpless and useless, and, ceasing to tremble, rusts. She seems to have been so totally unworthy of tenderness, that it is an additional proof of the kindness of Pope's heart to have been able to love such a being. But we must love something. I agree with Mr. B. that she "could at no time have regarded Pope personally with attachment, 'because she was incapable of attachment; but I deny that Pope could not be regarded with personal attachment by a worthier woman. It is not probable, indeed, that a woman would have fallen in love with him as he walked along the Mall, or in a box at the opera, nor from a balcony, nor in a ball-room; but in society he seems to have been as amiable as unassuming, and with the greatest disadvantages of figure, his head and face were remarkably handsome, especially his eyes."

On the notorious "step beyond decorum" Byron comments as follows: "Mr. G. charges Mr. B. with 'suggesting that Pope

'attempted' to commit a rape upon Lady M. Wortley Montague. There are two reasons why this could not be true. The first is, that like the chaste Letitia's prevention of the intended ravishment by 'Fireblood' (in Jonathan Wild ¹), it might have been impeded by a timely compliance. The second is, that however this might be, Pope was probably the less robust of the two; and (if the lines on Sappho were really intended for this lady) the asserted consequences of her acquiescence in his wishes would have been a sufficient punishment." In this "playful" way Byron treats this matter which threw up so much dust in the controversy. In a note to his first letter he had already expressed his opinion that Lady Mary was greatly to blame, not for having rejected Pope, but for having encouraged him, quoting a few lines of hers:

"And when the long hours of the Public are past,
And we meet with Champaigne and a Chicken at last,
May every fond pleasure that moment endear!
Be banished afar both discretion and fear!
Forgetting or scorning the airs of the Crowd,
He may cease to be formal, and I to be proud,
Till lost in the Joy we confess that we live,
And he may be rude, and yet I may forgive!"

"There, Mr. Bowles, what say you to such a supper with such a woman?" he exclaims. Whatever may be the value of Lord Byron's observations we may at least give him credit for having relieved the tone of invidious altercation, which was a very strong feature in the controversy.

"Mr. Bowles appears to be angry with Mr. Gilchrist for four reasons," he writes: — "firstly, because he wrote an article in the London Magazine; secondly because he afterwards avowed it; thirdly, because he was the author of a still more extended article in the *Quarterly Review*; and fourthly, because he was not the author of the said *Quarterly* article, and

¹ Bk. 3, chapter VII.

had the audacity to disavow it — for no earthly reason but because he had not written it.”

Mr. Bowles speaks of a *misnomer*, referring to Gilchrist's *Answer to Bowles*; it should have been called Gilchrist's *Abuse of Bowles*. “But,” Byron observes, “an answer may be abusive and yet no less an answer, though indisputably a temperate one might be the better of the two; but if abuse is to cancel all pretensions to reply, what becomes of Mr. Bowles's answers to Gilchrist?”

After telling the anecdote about “Aganippe's fountain and the poets” Gilchrist had derided Bowles's sensitiveness to criticism. Byron asks: “Is Mr. B. a poet, or is he not?” If he be, he must, from his very essence, be sensitive to criticism; and even if he be not, he need not be ashamed of the common repugnance to being attacked. All that is to be wished is, that he had considered how disagreeable a thing it is, before he assailed the greatest moral poet of any age or in any language.”

Bowles unfortunately speaks of “his name and Mr. Gilchrist's being brought together.” Lord Byron even draws Bowles's attention to this lack of courtesy. Courtesy requires, in speaking of others and ourselves, that we should place the name of the former first — and not ‘Ego et Rex meus’. He even corrects mistakes against grammar in Bowles's pamphlets. And as for Bowles declaring that he has always been ready to admit any errors he might have been led into, “a page and a half — nay only a page before — Mr. B. re-affirms his conviction that ,what he has said of Pope's moral character is (generally speaking) true, and ‘that his poetical principles are invariable and invulnerable. He has also published three pamphlets, — ay, four of the same tenor, — and yet, with this declaration and these declamations staring him and his adversaries in the face, he speaks of his readiness to admit errors or to abandon prejudices!!!”

Referring to some passages in Gilchrist's letter, in which

Bowles is represented as being wrapped up in self-love, paying attention only to the rich and great, sneering on the obscure and humble possessor of talents, only because he is poor, sensitive in a peculiar manner to all criticism and complaining unless it chants his praise, having the affectation of "gentylness", a super-stratum of innate vulgarity, being a priest in drink etc. etc., Bowles exclaims: "this pamphlet is a mud-cart indeed!" But Byron consoles him, and tells him he is quite wrong in supposing Gilchrist to have set the first example in Europe of this "mode of Christian criticism". "What Pagan criticism may have been, we know but little," he says, "the names of Zoilus and Aristarchus survive, and the works of Aristotle, Longinus, and Quintilian: but of "Christian Criticism" we have already had some specimens in the works of Philelphus, Poggius, Scaliger, Milton, Salmasius, the Cruscanti (versus Tasso), and the F. Academy (against the Cid), and the Antagonists of Voltaire, and of Pope — to say nothing of some articles in most of the reviews' It is a pity that Mr. B. cannot witness some of the Italian controversies, or become the subject of one. He would then look upon Mr. Gilchrist as a panegyrist!" "One of the first and principal topics of reproach (in Mr. Bowles's pamphlet) is, that Gilchrist is a grocer, that he has a pipe in his mouth, ledger-book, green canisters, dingy shop-boy, half a hogshead of brown treacle etc. Nay, the same delicate raillery is upon the very title-page. (Byron refers here to a quotation from Pope's epistle to Arbuthnot on the title page of *A reply to an unsentimental sort of critic*: Come, let me flap this bug)." When controversy has once commenced upon this footing, as Dr. Johnson said to Dr. Percy, 'Sir, there is an end of politeness — we are to be as rude as we please — Sir, you said that I was short-sighted'. Byron thinks it honourable to Gilchrist that being engaged in commerce he had the taste and found the leisure to become so able a proficient in the higher literature of his own and other countries, in which opinion he undoubtedly

has many adherents. And indeed, Bowles himself very soon (Febr. 17th 1821) admits that it was most unfair to make these remarks on Gilchrist's station in life. "That a word has appeared from which you might suppose I alluded with disrespect to your situation in life, I regret — *indictum id volo* — "but allusions to the private life of a retired clergyman in which he is held out almost as a crazy hypochondriac, is not criticism but railing."

The criticism, indeed, contained in these pamphlets, would fill very few pages; the railing fills volumes; and I am inclined to think that W. Roscoe, was right in what he wrote afterwards¹, when he tells Bowles it is his own fault that "by degrees the debate about Pope has assumed a different aspect, and instead of being an inquiry, how far he was guilty of the various delinquencies which you have alleged against him, has taken the appearance of an inquiry, how far you had any just and probable cause of imputing them to him." Of Bowles's poetical effusion against Gilchrist Byron does not take very much notice. "It is painful — painful — to see such a suicide, though at the shrine of Pope," he says.

The poem occurs at the end of *Observations on the poetical character of Pope, further elucidating the Invariable principles of poetry*:

"What, shall the dark reviler cry, "Oh Shame",
If one vile slanderer is held up by name!
Shall the rank, loathsome miscreant of the age,
Sit, like a nightmare, grinning on a page.
Turn round his murky orbs that roll in spite,
And clench his fiendish claws in grim delight;
And shall not an indignant flash of day
Scare the voracious vampire from his prey?

Ye, dark inquisitors, a monk-like band,
Who o'er some shrinking victim-author stand,

¹ In his answer to Bowles's *Final appeal to the public*.

A solemn, secret, and vindictive brood,
 Only terrific in your cowl and hood;
 Yes! Byron once more sternly shall arise,
 Snatch from your grasp the panting sacrifice
 Dash in your face the code of bloody law
 And lash you with your own red scourges raw!

But chiefly thee, whose manly, generous mind,
 So nobly valiant against woman-kind,
 Thinks that the man of satire, unprov'd
 Might stab the heart of her he fondly lov'd
 And thus malignantly as mean apply
 The assassin's vengeance and the cowards' lie
 Thee, whose coarse fustian, strip'd with tinsel phrase
 Is eked with tawdry scraps, and tags of plays,
 Whose pye-bald character so aptly suit
 The two extremes of Bantam and of Brute
 Compound grotesque of sullenness and show,
 The chattering magpie and the croaking crow;

Who with sagacious nose, and leering eye,
 Dost scent the taint of distant pruriency
 Turn every object to one loathsome shape,
 Hear but a laugh and cry "a Rape, a Rape",
 Whose heart contends with thy saturnian Head,
 A root of hemlock, and a lump of lead;
 Swelling vain Folly's self-applauding horn,
 Shall the indignant muse hold forth to scorn.

Gilchrist, proceed, to other hearts impute
 The feelings that thy own foul spirit suit:
 Round thy cold brain let loathsome demons swarm,
 Its native dullness into life to warm,
 Then with a visage half grimace half spite
 Run, howling, "Pope, Pope, Pope", and howling bite
 Reckless, thy hideous rancour I defy.
 All which thy brain can brood, thy rage apply
 And thus stand forth spite of thy venom'd foam
 To give thee bite for bite and lash thee limping home.

Earlier in his second letter Byron had already observed how in fifteen pages Bowles speaks of the reviewers twice, observing that it would be difficult to find two passages in fifteen pages more at variance.

Bowles wishes to address a certain point particularly "to those most respectable characters, who have the direction and management of the periodical critical press."

"That the press may be, in some instances, conducted by respectable characters is probable enough; but if they are so, there is no occasion to tell them of it; and if they are not, it is base adulation. In either case, it looks like a kind of flattery, by which those gentry are not very likely to be softened", says Byron, and he quotes the lines in the above poem which refer to the reviewers:

"Ye dark inquisitors, a monk-like band,
Who o'er some shrinking victim-author stand,
A solemn, secret, and vindictive brood,
Only terrific in your cowl and hood."

For the rest Byron does not venture on these lines, "for fear of infection" as he says, and it is reserved for Roscoe to analyse them, as we shall see.

With reference to Pope's moral character Bowles says very little in his letters to Lord Byron, probably because Byron's observations in this respect touched the spot. The same points are gone through again by Roscoe. He especially defends Martha Blount, pointing to her character and situation and the uniform testimony adduced in her favour. Bowles, acknowledging in his "final appeal" that these observations of Roscoe's ought to have their due weight, returns to the charge afterwards, expressing his opinion "that the friends of this damsel have no great reason to complain if some shade rests on her memory, who received with complacency indecent and licentious verses and letters from him who pronounced the verse accurst that:

"Gave virtue scandal, innocence a fear
Or from the soft-eyed virgin stole a tear!"

But Roscoe tells Bowles in his *Letter to B.* that, if Bowles thinks proper substantially to retain his opinion respecting Pope's moral character, he will not endeavour to remove his impressions, but that he cannot permit these unauthenticated and scandalous verses, or any others of a similar kind, to be brought forward as an imputation on the memory of a person, who, it is more than probable, never saw them.

In refuting the charge of duplicity brought against Pope by Bowles, Roscoe accuses Bowles himself of duplicity:

"The edition of Pope says: "Among the omissions I now sincerely wish I had included the farce of "Three hours after marriage", but it was printed, when I was afflicted with illness and was scarcely able to judge for myself. I think it right to express my sorrow, though too late."

But Mr. Bowles had probably forgotten, when he made this apology that he had before not only recognised the publishing, but had stated the particular reasons which had induced him to lay it before the public, as follows: — "Pope was certainly as much concerned in writing this farce, as he was in writing the memoirs of Scriblerus; it was a joint production; though it is unworthy the names of its authors; yet, as so much has been said of it, and as it was the cause of the memorable quarrel of Pope with Cibber, I have thought it might gratify curiosity, if I gave it a place." (Pope's Works vol. X, p. 245 Bowles's edition).

Towards the end of his letter to Bowles, Roscoe comes to the lines written on Oct. Gilchrist. He tries to find out for himself who the "dark reviler", and who the "vile slanderer" is, the question, which he had asked in his *Life of Pope*." We have Mr. Bowles's public and solemn asseveration that these names were not intended for Pope." But they cannot both refer to Gilchrist, as they are evidently meant for two persons. He comes to the conclusion that "vile slanderer", cannot refer to Campbell. Nor was it intended for Lord Byron, he says,

"for although his Lordship has, on many occasions, made you the object of his severest satire, yet you have been so far from resenting it, that from every additional stripe you seem to have derived additional pleasure."

But then the term can only refer to the Reviewers and the verses beginning "Ye, Dark Inquisitors, throw a full light on the subject". Yet, it is rather remarkable that Mr. Bowles should call on Lord Byron to lash the Reviewers, when he could not have forgotten that in the very poem to which he alludes, he was no less the object of his Lordship's satire than the Reviewers themselves."

Yet on a more exact examination Roscoe comes to the conclusion that the Reviewers cannot have been meant either. The lines, then, must be considered as a kind of unclaimed property, which, until some person can be found who appears to be better entitled to them, "must necessarily remain with yourself."

We see, then, that there is a good deal of bickering over Pope's moral character. But with a man like the Rev. W. L. Bowles as an opponent there is not much credit to be gained. He keeps reiterating the same sentiments, holding on to his once uttered opinions with the most unyielding pertinacity. In Captain Medwin's *Conversations of Byron*, we find him described by Byron as „a pleasant gentlemanly man — a good fellow for a parson." But judging from his pamphlets, I should be more inclined to agree with some of the epithets given to him by Mr. Gilchrist and of which the mildest is "sensitive plant".

But for his unfortunate criticism of Pope's character -- in which he chiefly followed Warton and others of his predecessors, only aggravating their strictures by insinuations of his own — we might have felt more sympathy for this champion of romanticism. Though we need not go as far as Lord Byron, it seems questionable, whether in an edition of a poet's works it is necessary, or even decent, to rake up all the old stories that have

accumulated in the course of years and gradually been covered with a thick coating of exaggeration. It would be pardonable only in as far as it would enable us to gain a clearer insight into the poet's works.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTROVERSY AND THE POETICAL CHARACTER OF POPE

In volume X of his edition of Pope's works the Rev. W. L. Bowles gives "Concluding observations on the Poetic Character of Pope".

"I presume, it will be readily granted", he says, "that all images drawn from what is beautiful or sublime in the works of nature are more beautiful and sublime than any images drawn from art; and that they are therefore, per se, more poetical. In like manner those passions of the human heart which belong to nature in general, are, per se, more adapted to the higher species of Poetry than those which are derived from incidental and transient manners. A description of a forest is more poetical than a description of a cultivated garden; and the passions which are pourtrayed in the Epistle of an Eloisa render such a poem more poetical (whatever might be the difference of merit in point of execution) intrinsically more poetical than a poem founded on the characters, incidents and modes of artificial life; for instance, the Rape of the Lock. If this be admitted, the rule by which we would estimate Pope's general poetical character would be obvious.

Let me not, however, be considered as thinking that the subject alone constitutes poetical excellency. The execution is to be taken into consideration at the same time; for, with Lord Harvey, we might fall a sleep over the "Creation" of Blackmore, but be alive to the touches of animation and satire in Boileau. The subject, and the execution, therefore, are equally to be con-

sidered; — the one respecting the Poetry, — the other the art and powers of the Poet."

These are the "invariable principles of poetry", which we afterwards find more elaborately worked out in Bowles's answer to Th. Campbell. With regard to the poetical subject, he cannot class Pope among the highest order of poets; with regard to "the execution", none ever was his superior. With the exception of the Epistle of Eloisa, Pope must be judged according to the rank in which he stands, among those of the French school, not the Italians, among those whose delineations are taken more from manners than from nature. In *The Epistle of Eloisa* Pope appears on the high ground of the Poet of nature; but this certainly is not his general character. Bowles admits that in the particular instance of this poem Pope stands distinguished and superior, and that nothing of the kind has ever been produced equal to it for pathos, painting and melody. But as Pope has chosen to write satires and epistles, they must be compared, he thinks, not "as Warton has injudiciously done" with pieces of genuine poetry, but only with things of the same kind. "The career, which Pope opened to himself, in writing satires was in the second order in Poetry, and if in that line (a line pursued by Horace, Juvenal, Dryden, Boileau) he stands the highest, upon these grounds we might fairly say, with Johnson, it is superfluous to ask whether Pope were a poet."

Afterwards coming to "picturesque description"; that is, accurate representations from external objects of nature, Bowles lays down another principle: "no one can stand pre-eminent as a great poet, unless he has not only a heart susceptible of the most pathetic or most exalted feelings of nature, but an eye attentive to and familiar with, every external appearance that she may exhibit, in every change of season, every variation of light and shade, every rock, every tree, every leaf in her solitary places. He who has not an eye to observe these, and who cannot with a glance distinguish every diversity of every hue

in her variety of beauties, must so far be deficient in one of the essential qualities of a poet"¹.

Bowles calls Pope particularly deficient in this respect, ascribing his deficiency to infirmities and physical causes, and referring to his weak eyes and tottering strength and his "being lifted into his chariot or his barge" when he left his own laurel circus at Twickenham. He was eminently successful where his knowledge of nature could be gained by books, or suggested by imagination, but even here, Bowles says, he only proved that he could not go far, and

The streams that shine between he hills
The grotts that echo to the tinkling rills,

were possibly transcripts of what he could most easily transcribe, — his own views and scenery. Bowles has no doubt that, if Pope had been gifted with the same powers of observing outward nature as he displayed in his description of scenes of artificial life, he would have evinced as much accuracy in describing the appropriate and peculiar beauties, such as nature exhibits in the Forest, where he lived. But to a lover of nature Pope's Windsor Forest and his pastorals "must always appear defective."

Bowles then proceeds to divide Pope's works under the following heads: Pathetic, Sublime, Descriptive, Moral and Satirical. He owns that in the pathetic, poetically considered, Pope stands highest, regretting that we have little more, truly pathetic than the *Epistle of Eloisa*, the *Elegy to the unfortunate lady* and the *Address to Lord Oxford*. In the sublime, as well as in descriptions from nature he is deficient. He therefore pursued that path in poetry, which was more congenial to his powers and in which he has shone without a rival.

In speaking of the Rape of the Lock, Bowles calls its "a com-

¹ In his answer to Th. Campbell Bowles tells us that the object he had in view when he used the expressions objected to were Pope's Pastorals and Windsor Forest.

position, to which it will be in vain to compare anything of the kind."

"All Pope's successful labour of correct and musical versification, all his talents of accurate description, though in an inferior province of poetry, are here consummately displayed, and, as far as artificial life, that is manners not passions, are capable of being rendered poetical, they are here rendered so, by the fancy, the propriety, the elegance and the poetic beauty of the sylphic machinery. This delightful poem appears to stand conspicuous and beautiful, in that medium where poetry begins to leave nature and approximates to local manners. The muse has indeed, no longer her great characteristic attributes, pathos or sublimity, but she appears so interesting that we almost doubt, whether the garb of elegant refinement is not as captivating, as the most beautiful appearances of nature."

And the whole controversy turns, on these points, Bowles never going, of course, beyond "almost doubting whether the poetry he criticises is not as captivating as the most beautiful appearances of natures."

In speaking of Pope's versification he doubts whether Johnson was a competent judge, when he wrote that "to attempt any further improvement of versification will be dangerous, art and diligence have done their best; and what shall be added will be the effort of tedious toil, and needless curiosity". Bowles admits that some who, like Johnson, have no ear for musical sounds, have yet a capacity of writing blank verse with intonation and variety, but he is of opinion that there is a great analogy between musical and poetical rhythm. He allows that Pope has made the versification of English couplets infinitely more smooth, but he declines to go further. He thinks Johnson's ear had been chiefly caught by Dryden and as Pope's versification was more equably connected than Dryden's (couplet with couplet being considered) he thought therefore that nothing could be added to Pope's versification. Without presuming to make

"his own ear the criterion of music", Bowles cannot help thinking that Dryden, and of later days Cowper, are much more harmonious in their general versification. In this respect he also mentions Sandys and Prior, and though the highest praise may be given to the undivided couplets of Pope for compactness, skill, precision and force, no one, unless his ear be habituated to a certain recurrence of pauses precisely at the end of a line, will assent to the position, that in versification "what he found brickwork, he left marble".

He thinks Pope deficient in variety, in variety only, with the exception of the *Epistle to Abelard*; Pope's verses on this account "want both force and harmony" in his opinion.

As we have seen Thomas Campbell took up the defence of Pope's poetical character in his "Specimens of the British poets" (Vol. I, pp. 260—271)¹. To do justice to Pope, he says, we should forget his imitators, if that were possible. "Pope gave our heroic couplet its strictest melody and tersest expression."

D'un mot mis en sa place, il enseigne le pouvoir.

He admits, however, that his peculiar rhythm and manner are not the very best in the whole range of our poetry; also, that his pauses have little variety and his phrases are too much weighed in the balance of antithesis. But we should look to the spirit that points his antithesis and to the rapid precision of his thoughts. Pope was neither so insensible to the beauties of nature nor so indistinct in describing them as to forfeit the character of a genuine poet. The faculty by which a poet luminously describes

¹ In a letter to Moore (from Byron) Febr. 22, 1821, we find the following verses (to the air of "How now, Madame Flirt" in the Beggar's Opera.

Bowles:

Why, how now, saucy Tom,
If you thus must ramble,
I will publish some
Remarks on Mr. Campbell.

Campbell:

Why, how now, Billy Bowles
Sure, the priest is maudlin!
(to the public):
How can you, damn your souls
Listen to his twaddling?

objects of art is essentially the same faculty, which enables him to be a faithful describer of simple nature. Nature and art are to a greater degree relative terms in poetical description than is generally recollected. And artificial objects and manners are of so much importance in fiction as to make the exquisite description of them no less characteristic of genius than the description of simple physical appearances. The poet is "creation's heir". He deepens our social interest in existence. It is surely by the liveliness of the interest which he excites in existence, and not by the class of subjects which he chooses that we most fairly appreciate the genius or the life of life which is in him. It is no irreverence to the external charms of nature to say that they are not more important to a poet's study than the manners and affections of his species. Nature is the poet's goddess, but by nature no one rightly understands her mere inanimate face — however charming it may be — or the simple landscape painting of trees, clouds, precipices and flowers. Nature in the wide and proper sense of the word, means life in all its circumstances — nature moral as well as external. As the subject of inspired fiction nature includes artificial forms and manners."

Campbell quotes Richardson, Homer, Milton, Shakespeare, all using artificial images: Satan's spear compared to the pine that makes the mast of some great ammiral, the ear-piercing fife, the royal banner and all quality, pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war. And he speaks of the launching of a ship of the line as one of the most sublime objects of artificial life. The scene is before him: the deep and silent expectation of ten thousand spectators; their final burst of enthusiasm.

After having quoted a few passages from Pope to prove that he was by no means deficient as a painter of interesting external objects (Pope's Man of Ross; his picture of the dying pheasant; his winter-piece: So Zembla's rocks, the beauteous work of frost, Rise white in air and glitter o'er the coast, etc.) he admits

with a sneer, that "neither these nor similar examples come up to Mr. Bowles's idea of that talent for the picturesque, which he deems essential to poetry (see p. 35): "No one can stand pre-eminent as a great poet, etc.). "But," says Campbell, "this botanizing perspicacity might be essential to a Dutch flower-painter. Sophocles displays no such skill and yet he is a genuine, a great and affecting poet. Throughout the Greek tragedians there is nothing to shew them more attentive observers of inanimate objects than other men. Pope's discrimination lay in the lights and shades of human manners, which are at least as interesting as those of rocks and leaves."

All these observations make on Mr. Bowles the impression that Campbell "could not have read the criticism which he discusses".¹

He maintains that works of art are less poetical than what is sublime or beautiful in works of nature; and that Pyramids, or the Chinese Wall, or the launching of a ship are rendered poetical chiefly by moral associations and physical circumstances. A drum and fife in themselves are not poetical, but in the consummate art of Shakespeare they are associated with "the pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war", and passions and pictures are called up of fortitude, of terror, of pity etc.; arms glittering in the sun, and banners waving in the air; and it is these pictures and passions from nature which make a drum or fife poetical. Heard before a booth in a fair, or in a regiment with wooden guns, the effect would be lost.

Of course, Bowles thinks Cowper superior to Pope, as a descriptive poet, because every tree and every peculiarity of colour and shape are so described that the reader becomes a spectator, and is doubly interested with the truth of colouring and the beauty of the scene, so vividly and so delightfully painted.

Richardson in his inspired "fictions"² he admits to be poe-

¹ See vol. V p. 526 Byron's Letters and Journals (John Murray).

² Expression used by Campbell in his defence of Pope's poetical character.

tical, but only as far as the passions excited are concerned and no farther. And when he speaks of passions as poetical, he only refers to the most elevated and pathetic, to what is heroic, sublime, pathetic, or beautiful, in human feelings.

And as for Homer, "the whole of the *Odyssey* derives its peculiar charm from the scenes of nature; as the *Iliad* does from its loftier passions".

Milton was "not so unpoetical as Campbell imagined". He does not compare Satan's spear 'with the mast of some great admiral'; and Bowles quotes the passage:

His spear, to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian Hills to be the mast
Of some great ammiral, were but a wand!!
Satan's shield, Campbell asserted, was compared to "the moon seen through a telescope".

"My dear Sir," Bowles exclaims, "You forget the passage; or have purposely left out more than half of its essential poetical beauty".

"His pond'rous shield

Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening, from the top of Fesole,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe."

The poet, conscious how unpoetical the optic glass was, in itself, introduces all the circumstances from nature, — the evening, the top of Fesole, the scenes of Valdarno —, and the lands, mountains, and rivers in the moon's orb; and it is these which make the passage poetical, not the telescope.

Next Bowles quotes a passage from *Paradise Regained* — the picture of Imperial Rome, in which images from art are most successfully introduced, and made most highly poetical.

The launching of the ship, which Bowles has already touched on, he cannot yet dismiss. He quotes Campbell's description

and proves from it his own proposition, that Campbell, to make the object of art so poetically interesting, is obliged to have recourse to nature:

“When the vast bulwark sprung from her cradle, the calm water on which she swung majestically round, gave the imagination a contrast of the stormy element, on which she was soon to ride. All the days of battle, and nights of danger, she had to encounter; all the ends of the earth which she had to visit; and all that she had to do and suffer for her country, rose in awful presentiment before the mind; and when the heart gave her a benediction, it was like one pronounced on a living being!!”

In his first volume of *Specimens of the British Poets*, Thomas Campbell says: “Nature is the poet’s goddess; but by nature no one rightly understands her mere inanimate face, however charming it may be; or the simple landscape painting of trees, clouds, precipices, and flowers. Why then try Pope, or any other poet exclusively by his powers of describing inanimate phaenomena? Nature in the wide and proper sense of the word, means life in all its circumstances — nature moral as well as external.” To prove to Campbell that he has never tried Pope in the way described and has never denied this acceptation of the word nature to be the right one, Bowles briefly states the course of his argument and Campbell’s representation of it:

1st. Works of Nature, speaking of those more beautiful and sublime, are more sublime and beautiful than works of art; therefore more poetical. — 2nd. The passions of the human heart, which are the same in all ages, and which are the causes of the sublime and pathetic in sentiment, are more poetical than artificial manners. — 3d. The great poet of human passions is the most consummate master of his art; and the heroic, the lofty and the pathetic, as belonging to this class, are distinguished. — 4th. If these premises be true, the des-

criptive poet, who paints from an intimate knowledge of external nature, is more poetical, supposing the fidelity and execution equal, not than the painter of human passions, but the painter of external circumstances in artificial life; as Cowper paints a morning walk, and Pope a game of cards! And Campbell's representation of this argument (or mutilation as Bowles calls it afterwards) is: "He alone is a poet who paints from works of external nature; and his knowledge of external nature must be as minute as that of a botanist and Dutch painter."

Bowles complains that Campbell builds his answer on this mutilation of his propositions, leaving out the most material part of his proposition, omitting what was connected and even consecutive, and connecting what was neither the one nor the other; applying the minute knowledge of external nature, one essential of a great descriptive poet, to tragedians in whose more elevated works (the subjects of which are the loftier passions of general nature) descriptions of external nature ought least of all to have place.

Where Campbell triumphantly gives a quotation from Shakspeare to show that towers, temples, palaces can be poetical, Bowles reminds him that the tower was "cloud-capt", the temple associated with the solemnity of religious awe, palaces with the splendour of earthly magnificence and that all these images are brought into one grand and awful picture, to shew the mighty devastation of final ruin. It is always the moral associations and physical circumstances that make works of art poetical. "What makes the venerable towers of Westminster Abbey, on the side of the Thames, more poetical, as objects, than the tower for the manufactory of patent shot, surrounded by the same scenery and towering amidst the smoke of the city"? Bowles asks. And in a few more questions he gives the quintessence of what he has contended throughout his observations on the poetical character of Pope and his "Invariable principles of poetry":

"Do you think a game of cards as poetical, supposing the execution in the artists equal, as a description of a walk in a forest; an age of refinement as conducive to pictures of poetry, as a period less refined? Are not passions, affections etc. of the human heart a higher source of what is pathetic or sublime in poetry, than habits or manners, that apply only to artificial life? If you agree with me, I am satisfied; if not, we differ, and always shall, on the principles of poetical criticism."

Campbell never answered these Invariable principles directly¹, but on March 1st 1822 there appeared from his hand in the *New Monthly Magazine* a review of Mac Dermot's letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles, in which he expresses his belief that, though he did not enter into further discussion with Mr. W. L. Bowles upon the subject, his observations and his "ship of the line", have withstood the battle and the breeze, and will continue to do so, though Mr. Bowles insinuates in his Reply to Lord Byron that he saw upon reflexion, she must have surrendered, though she withstood them for a thousand years. Further he explains why he declined further contest with Mr. Bowles. It was not for the reason he (Mr. B.) himself assigns in his Reply to Lord Byron, "because he could not", nor yet, because he was frightened at the sound of "invariable principles", as his Lordship insinuates; but, because he felt confident, that as Mr. Bowles's principles and his own strictures upon them were both before the public, it would decide impartially between them, and feel that he neither mistook their spirit, nor omitted any part of them, which could have in the least weakened the force of his remarks.

In his review of *Spence's Anecdotes of Books and men*² in the

¹ Beers on p. 65 of "A history of English Romanticism" says: "Campbell replied in the *New Monthly Magazine*, of which he was editor, and this drew out another rejoinder from Bowles". He can only mean the article referred to in this paragraph; as a reply to the *Inv. Pr.* it came a little late.

² Two editions of *Spence's anecdotes* appeared in 1820 on the same day; one by S. W. Singer, the other by Edmund Malone.

Quarterly Review of July, 1820, Disraeli finds an excuse for an attack upon Bowles's *Invariable Principles*. He agrees with Johnson's words to Joseph Warton: "To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only show the narrowness of the definer"; and ridicules Bowles for what he has said about "nature", "general nature", "external nature", "moral nature", — and so on. "Nature is a critical term which the Bowleses¹ have been explaining for more than two thousand years."

The artificial test — i. e. Bowles's principles — is "repugnant to a man of taste, who can take enlarged views, and to the experience of the true critic. In the contrast of human tempers and habits, in the changes of circumstances in society, and the consequent mutations of tastes, the objects of poetry may be different in different periods; pre-eminent genius obtains its purpose by its adaptation to this eternal variety; and on this principle, if we would justly appreciate the creative faculty, we cannot see why Pope should not class, at least in file, with Dante, or Milton". This may all be quite true, but if it comes to assigning to a poet the place due to him, when compared with other poets, it is little to the purpose. Disraeli calls such "arbitrary standards" and such "narrowing theories of art" a sort of concealed egotism, and a stratagem of self-love. Inadvertently he used the terms "in-door" and "out-door" nature in discussing Pope's preference for the former, and Bowles readily avails himself of the opportunity thus offered him for paying Disraeli (or Octavius Gilchrist as he thinks) back². "What is in-door nature? Is it a chair, a table, or per adventure a frying-pan, or gridiron?" Others have laid down absurd principles of definition and criterion", Disraeli says. "Wordsworth often so true a poet by genius, is by his theory so mistaken

¹ The first reply to this article was written by „one of the family of the Bowleses."

² In a Reply to an unsentimental sort of critic by "one of the family of the Bowleses".

a one". And Darwin ascertained that "the essence of poetry was picture"; a very convenient principle for one whose solitary talent lay in the minute pencillings of his descriptions". This idea was instantly adopted and our author-painters now asserted, that if the excellence of a poem consisted in forming a picture, the more perfect poetry would be painting itself. In consequence of this invariable principle of poetry 'Mr. Shee, in his brilliant 'Rhymes on Art' declared that 'the narrative of an action is not comparable to the action itself before the eyes', and Barry ardently exclaimed that "painting is poetry realised".

"To detract", Disraëli says, "from what itself is excellent, by parallels with another species of excellence or by trying it by some arbitrary criterion, will ever terminate, as here in false criticism and absurd depreciation".

The rest of Disraeli's article is given to the observations on the moral character of Pope, and therefore does not concern us here; but there is one passage in the article which is of the highest importance, as it offered Byron the excuse to take up arms in the controversy.

In *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* Byron, referring to Bowles's: *The spirit of Discovery at Sea*, says

Nor this alone — but, pausing on the road,
The Bard sighs forth a gentle episode,
And gravely tells — attend, each beauteous Miss!
When first Madeira trembled to a kiss.

On one occasion Mr. Bowles seems to have met Lord Byron at the house of Samuel Rogers in St. James's Place ¹, and to have availed himself of the opportunity to speak to Lord Byron about these lines in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

"As the rest of the company were going into another room,

¹ Byron even appears to remember the year in which the meeting took place, though he does not recollect some other particulars (See his first letter to Murray on Bowles).

I said I wished to speak one word to his Lordship. He came back with much apparent courtesy. I then said to him, in a tone of seriousness, but that of perfectly good humour, 'My lord, I should not have thought of making any observations on whatever you might be pleased to give to the world as your opinion of any part of my writings; but I think if I can shew that you have done me a palpable and public wrong, by charging me with having written what I never wrote, or thought of, your own principles of justice will not allow the impression to remain'. I then spoke of a particular couplet which he had introduced into his satire —

"Thy woods, Madeira, trembled with a kiss!"

The above anecdote was given by Disraëli in his article in the *Quarterly Review*, and though the matter seems insignificant enough, Byron devotes about a page and a half to it in his first letter to Murray on the Rev. W. L. Bowles. Before we pass on to Bowles's replies to the *Quarterly Review* and Byron's letters, I wish to draw the reader's attention to an inaccuracy which occurs in the short account of the controversy given in Murray's *Byron, Letters and Journals*, vol. V, p. 524: "Meanwhile¹ the war of pamphlets had grown more bitter. Bowles answered the *Quarterly Review* in *A Reply to the charges brought by the Reviewer of Spence's Anecdotes in the Quarterly Review for October 1820, against the last editor, of Pope's Works*." No: Bowles's first reply to the *Quarterly Review* was: *A Reply to an unsentimental sort of critic, the reviewer of Spence's Anecdotes in the Quarterly Review for October* (as observed before, this should be July) 1820, otherwise to the *Longinus* of "in-door nature" by one of the family of the Bowleses.

And indeed, the editor might have known this, for only twenty

¹ If "meanwhile" refers to the letters of Lord Byron and Mr. Bowles (and to what else can it refer, as it immediately follows the passage in which these letters are spoken of?) this also is inaccurate, as Lord Byron's first letter shows that he had read Bowles's Reply to the Charges etc.

lines lower down he continues: To this attack Gilchrist replied in a Letter to the Rev. William Lisle Bowles, in Answer to a Pamphlet recently published under the title of „A Reply to an unsentimental sort of Critic etc.”

However, as both “*the Reply to an unsentimental sort of critic*” and “*the Reply to the Charges etc.*” only speak of the moral character of Pope, and for the rest contain sarcasms, personal remarks and even abuse which have nothing whatever to do with the controversy, they need not be discussed here.

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In the Pamphleteer XXXIV and XXXV 1820 Bowles wrote *Observations on the Poetical Character of Pope further elucidating the Invariable Principles of Poetry with A sequel in Reply to Octavius Gilchrist*. The article in no. XXXIV and the sequel only deal with Pope's moral character and though the rest of the article is mostly a repetition of what Bowles has already stated once or twice before, there is a quotation in it from Bowles's edition of Pope, a note to the Rape of the Lock, which is interesting as showing the style of Bowles's criticism.

“This poem is founded, however, upon local manners, and of all poems of that kind, it is undoubtedly far the best; whether we consider the exquisite tone of raillery, the musical sweetness etc. of the versification, the management of the story, or the kind of fancy and airiness given to the whole; but what entitles it to its high claim of peculiar excellencies? — The powers of imagination, and the felicity of invention, displayed in adopting and most artfully conducting, a machinery so fanciful, so appropriate, so novel and so poetical. The introduction of Discord, etc. as machinery in the *Lutrin*, is not to be mentioned at the same time, such a being as Discord will suit a hundred subjects; but the elegant, the airy sylph,

“Loose to the wind, whose airy garments flew,
 Thin glittering textures of the filmy dew,
 Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies,
 Where light disports, in ever mingling dyes.”

Such a being as this is suited alone to the identical and peculiar poem in which it is employed. I will now go a step farther in appreciating the elegance and beauty of this poem; and I would ask the question: Let any other poet, — Dryden, Waller, Cowley, or Gray, be assigned this subject, and this machinery; could they have produced a work altogether so correct and beautiful, from the same given materials? Let us, however, still remember, that this poem is founded on local manners, and the employment of the sylphs in artificial life; for this reason the poem must have a secondary rank, when considered strictly and truly with regard to its poetry. Whether Pope would have excelled as much in loftier subjects, of a general nature, in the high mood of *Lycidas*, the rich colourings of *Comus*, and the magnificent descriptions and sublime images of *Paradise Lost*, or in painting the characters and employments of aerial beings

“That tread the ouse of the salt deep,
Or run upon the sharp wind of the North,”

is another question. He has not attempted it; I have no doubt, he would have failed; but to have produced a poem infinitely the highest of its kind, and which no other poet could perhaps altogether have done so well, is surely very high praise. The excellence is Pope's own, the inferiority is in the subject; no one understood better that excellent rule of Horace, “*Sumite, materiem, etc.*”.

Bowles gives this quotation from his edition to show that “some great critics may borrow of those, whose principles they affect to despise”, referring to the following passage in Disraëli's article in the *Quarterly Review*:

“In the contrast of human tempers and habits, in the changes of circumstances in society, and the consequent mutations of tastes, the objects of poetry may be different in different periods; pre-eminent genius obtains its purpose by its adaptation to

this eternal variety; and on this principle, if we would justly appreciate the creative faculty, we cannot see why Pope should not class, at least in file, with Dante or Milton. It is probable that Pope could not have produced an 'Inferno', or a 'Paradise Lost', for his invention was elsewhere; but it is equally probable that Dante and Milton, with their cast of mind, could not have exquisitely touched the refined gaiety of "the Rape of the Lock." "Though", Bowles adds, "I should never have thought of applying the observation as is here done, that because Milton could not write the Rape of the Lock, and Pope could not write Paradise Lost, one poet was in the same file with the other!"

Bowles might also have used this quotation from his edition of Pope, to prove that the execution of a poem did not count for nothing with him, as was laid to his charge again and again by various opponents.

Bowles pronounces emphatically as his opinion that: "he who exerts his talents on the highest poetical subject; he who sustains a flight equal to that subject; who, in pursuing it, executes the high conception that speaks with an everlasting voice; he who thus conceives and executes a great and transcendental subject, will stand superior to him who may have displayed as much judgment, and powers of execution on a gayer and more evanescent subject; and therefore Milton, and Dante, and Homer, and Shakespeare, must stand in the intrinsic excellence of their art, superior to Pope, though they could not have described as well the subject he has treated so exquisitely."

Coming to Disraeli's "Nature is a critical term which the Bowleses have been explaining for more than two thousand years" Bowles says: "if the writer wants an explanation, the Bowleses need not be consulted; the expressive language was at hand, from authority that will not be doubted:

First follow nature and your judgment frame
By her just standard, which is still the same.
Unerring nature, still divinely bright,

One clear, uncharged, and universal light,
 Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart
 At once, the Source, and End, and Test of Art.

(Essay on Criticism).

He maintains that a work of art abstractedly considered as a work of art, cannot be made poetical without adjuncts from nature:

Scarce a sickly straggling flower
 Decks the rough castle's rifted tower.

(Warton)

He who would see Melrose aright,
 Must see it by the pale moonlight.

(Scott).

But as one of the finest pictures of modern poetry, where nature makes the works of art so much more effectually poetical, he gives the dying Gladiator¹, who remembers, as he dies, the scenes of his infancy, the hut of his mother on the banks of the Danube:

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
 He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
 Consents to death, but conquers agony,
 And his drooped head sinks gradually low —
 And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
 From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one
 Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
 The arena swims around him — he is gone,
 Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won.

He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes
 Were with his heart — and that was far away;
 He recked not of the life he lost nor prize,
 But where his rude hut by the Danube lay —
 There were his young barbarians all at play,
 There was their Dacian mother — he, their sire,
 Butchered to make a Roman holiday —
 All this rushed with his blood — Shall he expire
 And unavenged? — Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!"

¹ Childe Harved IV, CXL.

Harold

It has been often thought that Byron's object in the Pope controversy was mainly mischief; and though his love of mischief undoubtedly had something to do with it, I believe that from the first it was his sincere admiration and love of the poet whose reputation was involved in the disputation, that drove him to join battle with Bowles. This admiration he professes wherever he finds an occasion. In *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, he thinks it

"Better to err with Pope, than shine with Pye,"
and he regrets the days, when

"in this happy isle, a Pope's pure strain"
Sought the rapt soul to charm, nor sought in vain."
And after bidding

"a long good night to Marmion"
he sighs:

These are the themes that claim our plaudits now;
These are the Bards to whom the Muse must bow;
While Milton, Dryden, Pope, alike forgot,
Resign their hallowed bays to Walter Scott.

Byron is of opinion that the poets of his time — only Crabbe and Rogers (and perhaps Campbell) excepted — are altogether on the wrong track. He writes to John Murray, Sept. 15, 1817¹ "With regard to poetry in general, I am convinced, the more I think of it, that he (i. e. Moore) and all of us — Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, Moore, Campbell, I, — are all in the wrong, one as much as another; that we are upon a wrong revolutionary poetical system, or systems, not worth a damn in itself, and from which none but Rogers and Crabbe are free; and that the present and next generations will finally be of this opinion. I am the more confirmed in this by having lately gone over some of our classics, particularly Pope, whom I tried in this

¹ Murray's Byron Letters and Journals, Vol. IV, p. 169.

way, — I took Moore's poems and my own and some others, and went over them side by side with Pope's and I was really astonished (I ought not to have been so) and mortified at the ineffable distance in point of sense, harmony, effect, and even imagination, passion, and invention, between the little Queen Anne's man, and us of the Lower Empire.

"If I had to begin again", he says, "I would model myself accordingly".

In the first Canto of *Don Juan*¹ we find his poetical commandments:

Thou shalt believe in Milton, Dryden, Pope;
 Thou shalt not set up Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey;
 Because the first is crazed beyond all hope,
 The second drunk, the third so quaint and mouthy:
 With Crabbe it may be difficult to cope,
 And Campbell's Hippocrene is somewhat drouthy:
 Thou shalt not steal from Samuel Rogers, nor
 Commit flirtation with the muse of Moore.

His correspondence with Murray, Moore, Hodgson and others is full of the subject; Byron seems to have had Bowles on the mind at the time. And his indignation at the attack made on Pope is shown by the names he calls the poor vicar of Bremhill.

"Those miserable mountebanks of the day, the poets, disgrace themselves and deny God, in running down Pope, the most faultless of Poets, and almost of men"².

"So Bowles has been telling a story, too ('t is in the Quarterly), about the woods of "Madeira", and so forth. I shall be at Bowles again, if he is not quiet. He misstates or mistakes, in a point or two."³.

"Bowles must be bowled down," he writes to Murray in the

¹ Finished November 1818.

² To John Murray 4 Nov. 1920. Letters and Journals vol. V, p. 109.

³ To Thomas Moore 5 Nov. 1820. See Murray's *Byron's Works*. Letters and Journals Vol. V, p. 113.

same month¹. And to Thomas Moore (9 Dec. 1820): "I mean to plunge thick, too, into the contest upon Pope, and to lay about me like a dragon till I make manure of Bowles for the top of Parnassus"². He did not make any mistake about the authorship of the article in the *Quarterly Review*: "Disraëli wrote the article on Spence: I know him by the mark in his mouth. I am glad that the *Quarterly* has had so much classical honesty as to insert it: it is good and true"³. And to Francis Hodgson⁴: "The scoundrels of scribblers are trying to run down Pope, but I hope in vain. It is my intention to take up the cudgels in that controversy and to do my best to keep the swan of Thames in his true place." He expresses a hope that Hodgson will not be silent, as it is the common concern of all men of "Common sense, imagination, and a musical ear"⁵. And referring to the article in the *Quarterly Review*. "I do not know the author of that article, but I suspect Israeli, an indefatigable and an able writer."

He had lost all patience "with the atrocious cant and nonsense about Pope, with which our present blackguards are overflowing"⁶ and was determined to make head against it, hoping that there were still a few men of taste to second him "in the best cause of English Literature".

In his "Reply to Blackwood's *Edinburgh Magazine*"⁷ (Ravenna, March 15, 1820) which is chiefly directed against Southey, his arch-enemy, he writes:

¹ Murray's *Byron Letters and Journals*, Vol. V, p. 121.

² *Id.* Vol. V, p. 132.

³ To John Murray, Nov. 9, 1820. *Letters and Journals*, Vol. V, p. 114.

⁴ Dec. 22, 1820. *Letters and Journals*, Vol. V, p. 142.

⁵ Elton thinks many of Byron's songs and lyrics might have been composed for pure love of discord, and is often tempted to adapt Pope's line on Defoe: Earless on high stands unabashed-Byron. vol. II, p. 138.

⁶ To John Murray, March 29, 1820. *Murray's Byron, Letters and Journals* Vol. IV, p. 425.

⁷ See *Murray's Byron's Works Letters and Journals*, Vol. IV, p. 485.

"That this is the age of the decline of English poetry will be doubted by few who have calmly considered the subject. That there are men of genius among the present poets makes little against the fact, because it has been well said, that next to him who forms the taste of his country, the greatest genius is he who corrupts it. The great cause of the present deplorable state of English poetry is to be attributed to that absurd and systematic depreciation of Pope, in which, for the last few years, there has been a kind of epidemical recurrence. Men of the most opposite opinions have united upon this topic. Warton and Churchill began it, having borrowed the hint probably from the heroes of the Dunciad, and their own internal conviction that their proper reputation can be as nothing till the most perfect and harmonious of poets — he who, having no fault, has had reason made his reproach — was reduced to what they conceived to be his level; but even they dared not degrade him below Dryden. Goldsmith, and Rogers, and Campbell, his most successful disciples; and Hayley, who, however feeble, has left one poem 'that will not be willingly let die' (the Triumphs of Temper), kept up the reputation of that pure and perfect style; and Crabbe, the first of living poets, has almost equalled the master."

"These three personages, Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, had all of them a very natural antipathy to Pope; and I respect them for it, as the only original feeling or principle which they have contrived to preserve. But they have been joined in it by those who have joined them in nothing else: by the Edinburgh Reviewers, by the whole heterogeneous mass of living English poets, excepting Crabbe, Rogers, Gifford and Campbell, who, both by precept and practice, have proved their adherence; and by me, who have shamefully deviated in practice, but have ever loved and honoured Pope's poetry with my whole soul, and hope to do so till my

dying day."

"What have we got instead? A deluge of flimsy and unintelligible romances, imitated from Scott and myself, who have both made the best of our bad materials and erroneous system."

It may be asked (Byron says) why, having this opinion of the present state of poetry in England, he has not adopted a different plan in his own compositions, and endeavoured to correct rather than encourage the taste of the day. To this he answers, that it is easier to perceive the wrong than to pursue the right. From all this it appears that it is not in his ordinary impulsive manner, that Byron takes up "the cudgels to lay about him" and that his object in doing so was certainly not "mainly mischief". From his imitations of Pope, from his references to his beloved poet in his correspondence, and in his poetry it is clear that he recollected "that his earliest English poetical pleasures were drawn from the 'little nightingale' of Twickenham. He confesses that he has been among the builders who "raised a mosque by the side of a Grecian temple"; but he has "never been among the envious destroyers of the classic temple of our predecessor".

"I have loved and honoured the fame and name of that illustrious and unrivalled man, far more than my own paltry renown, and the trashy jingle of the crowd of 'Schools' and upstarts, who pretend to rival, or even surpass him"¹.

"Neither time, nor distance, nor grief, nor age, can ever diminish my veneration for him, who is the great moral poet of all times, of all climes, of all feelings, and of all stages of existence"².

Theoretically he is Pope's most ardent adherent, in practice he drifts further and further away from his master. He feels

¹ Byron's first letter to John Murray on Bowles's *Strictures on Pope*. *Letters and Journals*, Vol. V, p. 559.

² Byron's second letter to J. M. Vol. V, p. 590.

guilty; he keeps accusing himself of having betrayed Pope.

Byron's manner of rubbing it in with a will always makes it a little difficult to know exactly how far we must hold his feelings responsible for the words that flowed from his pen, the more so as in this case his feelings were so utterly at variance with his practice. As Helene Richter says so very aptly: "Während er sich als überzeugter Jünger sicher und geborgen fühlt in Pope, dem Herrn, legt ihm seine Muse in echt Byronscher Ironie ein romantisches Kukulxei in das Nest seines Klassizismus"¹. When he returned to London with the "Hints from Horace" as the result of his voyage, he had the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* in his trunk.

It is therefore not with the romantic poet Byron that we have to deal in this controversy, but with Byron the theorist, who undoubtedly admired Pope sincerely, and had perhaps a kind of fellow feeling for him (his lyricism, his wit, his sarcasm, perhaps even his physical defect), but who, nevertheless, in his extravagant praise of this poet, shows, in his observations, a kind of waywardness which almost makes us doubt, whether they really are a reflection of what he feels on the subject.

The first thing he falls foul of is of course Bowles's "invariable". "What is there of human, be it poetry, philosophy, wit, wisdom, science, power, glory, mind, matter, life, or death, which is "invariable"? The last item I think he might have omitted; that, at least, seems to be pretty "invariable".

Having once begun (not by his own wish, but by "the frequent recurrence" of his name in the pamphlets) he is "like an Irishman in 'a row', anybody's customer", and so he will have his say on the subject of "the ship". The long and the short of it is that Bowles maintains that the ship derives its poetry from the sun, the waves and the winds, and that Byron holds the opposite opinion, giving us *Wapping*, or the London Dock,

¹ *Anglia*, Band XLVIII. Neue Folge Band XXXVI, Drittes Heft, August 1924. Helene Richter: *Byron. Klassizismus und Romantik II*, p. 223

or the Paddington Canal, or a horsepond as succedanea for a calm sea ¹, contending that the sun would no longer be poetical without the ship or other works of art to shine upon. "What should we care," he asks, "for the tempest without the vessel in Falconer's Shipwreck?" And he looks upon himself as entitled to talk of naval matters, because he has swum more miles than most of the poets of his time together ever sailed.

Byron then gives us a lively description of a storm ² in the archipelago, with hundreds of white-sailed craft, obliged to "cut and run" before it, skimming along as quickly, but less safely than the seamew which hovered over them; their evident distress, their reduction to fluttering specks in the distance, their crowded succession, their littleness, as contending with the giant element. And nobody will differ from him, when he adds: "their aspect and their motion, all struck me as something far more poetical than the mere broad, brawling, shipless sea, and the sullen winds, could possibly have been without them." But all this has nothing to do with Bowles's propositions (unless he wanted to prove them, for he uses such a number of images from "Nature" in his description!) and Bowles maintains notwithstanding all Byron's beautiful descriptions that the ocean wants not the accessories of anything human to make it sublime, and therefore poetical. It is poetical, though not equally picturesque or beautiful, with or without them. In sunshine, in calm, in tempest, by night, by day, in its deepest solitudes it wants nothing of art to make it sublime, as speaking everywhere, in the east and in the west, in the north and the south, with one everlasting voice, 'Infinitude and Power'. And to prove to Byron that the sea can be poetical without a ship, Bowles quotes Crabbe ("Your Lordship does not, I believe, reckon him among those whom you are pleased to call 'naturals'"). Dyer, Byron himself are also called into requisition. Nay, he

¹ John Murray's *Byron's Letters and Journals*, Vol. V, p. 544.

² *Id.* p. 544/545.

even gives a passage in which a vessel on the stocks is described, to show the difference in poetical force. In fact Bowles refutes all Byron's silly comparisons one by one: his wind howling through a pig-sty, the sun shining on a footman's livery or a brass warming-pan etc.

Byron in speaking of the barren Hymettus — the whole coast of Attica, her hills and mountains, Pentelicus, Anchesmus, Philopappus, etc., and granting them to be poetical even if the name of Athens, of Athenians, and her very ruins, were swept from the earth, asks: "But am I to be told that the Nature of Attica would be more poetical without the 'Art' of the Acropolis, of the temple of Theseus? and of the still all Greek and glorious monuments of her exquisitely artificial genius?" A question which, again, has nothing to do with Bowles's proposition, which is summed up in his prompt denial that "abstractedly, as works of art, these works are as sublime, or, therefore, as poetical, as the sublimest images from nature".

We very often feel that the picturesque and the poetical are confounded by Byron. The desert, he says, what would it be without the pyramids? And Salisbury Plain without Stone Henge? And the poetry of Venice, does it depend upon the sea or the Canals? All such questions lead to a futile discussion and, on the part of Bowles, a very verbose discussion which gives no solution of the matter in hand. But if these and other questions that Lord Byron puts forward and the prolix answers that Bowles offers in his two letters to his adversary do not bring us much further, they at least show us the relation of Byron, as a theorist, towards nature. Sculpture he holds to be more poetical than nature itself, "in as much as it represents and bodies forth that ideal beauty and sublimity which is never to be found in actual nature. As far as regards female beauty he makes an exception.

Sculptors and painters do not copy from actual nature. Nature, in her natural aspect, does not furnish them with the

elements they require. The poetry of nature alone, exactly as she appears, is not sufficient to bear them out. "Nature is not lavish of her beauties; they are widely scattered, and occasionally displayed, to be selected with care, and gathered with difficulty." And this is what the artists do. A landscape painter invents and composes a landscape from impressions that he receives at different times; and "Canova in forming a statue took a limb from one, a hand from another, a feature from a third, and a shape, it may be from a fourth, probably at the same time improving upon all, as the Greek of old did in embodying his Venus." As Helene Richter expresses it: "Man be-
rauscht sich nicht an der Natur, man gibt sich ihr nicht hin, man lernt, sie mit geschick verwenden"¹.

Byron's descriptions are not photographs of the actual objects of art or nature; they are a reflection of the impressions he received when beholding them; they are an utterance of his subjectivity.

In his opinion nature should be complemented by art to make it more poetical. But the instances he gives all prove that he does not clearly distinguish the picturesque from the poetical. "Art is not inferior to nature for poetical purposes." And what is his illustration of this proposition? A regiment of soldiers; their arms, their dresses, their banners, and the art and artificial symmetry of their position and movements. And a Highlander's plaid, a Mussulman's turban, and a Roman toga are more "poetical" than the tattooed or untattooed buttocks of a New Sandwich savage!

And art not only complements nature, no, it is even superior to nature: "the bust of Antinous", Byron exclaims. "Is there anything in nature like this marble, excepting the Venus?" Is the Venus nature or art?

Though Byron calls "all this 'ordering' of poets purely a r b i-

¹ Helene Richter: Byron. Klassicismus und Romantik (Anglia, Band XLVIII Drittes Heft August 1924.)

trary on the part of Bowles, and "poets are always ranked according to their execution and not according to their branch of the art", yet in his mind "the highest of all poetry is ethical poetry, as the highest of all earthly objects must be moral truths"; and he is especially indignant at being told this is not so by one of the priesthood! His own principles of poetry seem indeed to be invariable, for to his mind Pope is a perfect classical model, the moral poet of all civilisation, a poet of a thousand years, etc. etc., beside whom the poets of Byron's own time are mere barbarians. It is surprising to see what an overwhelming mass of subjects Byron brings on the carpet against the principles that purport to define Pope's proper place in literature: Campbell's ship, the Archipelago, the Harbour of Constantinople, the Euxine, the marble waste of Tadmor, Grainger's Ode to Solitude, Hymettus, the Coast of Attica, the Parthenon, the Acropolis, the Pyramids, Stone Henge, Venice, the Cloacae of Tarquin, Greeks and Trojans fighting, Sculpture and painting, Julius Caesar, Dyer's Grongar Hill, Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's, the tragedies of Hughes and Fenton, Gray's Elegy, Cannon, Mrs. Unwin's needles, and what not.

It is as Hazlitt says: "Through the whole of the argument, Lord Byron pelts his reverend opponent with instances, like throwing a stone at a dog, which the incensed animal runs after, picks up, mumbles between his teeth and tries to see what it is made of". The question is, however, too tough for Mr. Bowles's powers of mastication, and though the fray is amusing, nothing comes of it. And nothing could come of it! Bowles held on to his invariable principles with a tenacity that no resistance could break, repeating those invariable principles over and over again, and applying them to every instance Byron put forward, "prosing on in a tone of obsequious pertinacity and sore pleasantries"; while Byron tries to prove from every instance that there is a certain poetical interaction, a reciprocity between nature and works of art, that in some cases works of art are,

poetically, superior to nature and that art is never inferior to nature for poetical purposes.

Nothing could reconcile such opponents, even if they had less futile questions at their disposal than "asking a foreigner on his approach to London, what strikes him as the most poetical of the towers before him" or, "which was the most poetical (at the parting of Hector and Andromache) the affectionate father, the tearfully smiling mother, the shrinking child, or the Helmet?" why a knife is not poetical, while a dagger is, and a fist (at Julius Caesar's murder), in Byron's opinion, should be considered as more appropriate, if we apply Bowles's principles, because "it would have had more of Bowles's Nature to help it".

The avalanche of enthusiasm with which Byron tried to overawe his reverend opponent seems to us to point to the fact that Byron himself felt he was defending a cause that was no longer tenable. Sixty-five years had elapsed since Joseph Warton's *Essay on Pope* appeared¹; and forty since the second volume dared to make its appearance. In those twenty-five years literary taste had changed gradually; that the change in the following forty years must have been much greater is evident.

In a note to his first letter Byron uses this very weapon (the ever changing literary taste) against Bowles's principles: "Mr. Bowles's title of *"invariable principles of poetry"*, is, perhaps, the most arrogant ever prefixed to a volume. So far are the principles of poetry from being *"invariable"*, that they never were, nor ever will be settled. These principles mean nothing more than the predilections of a particular age; and every age has its own, and a different from its predecessor. It is now Homer, and now Virgil; once Dryden, and since Walter Scott; now Corneille, and now Racine; now Crébillon, now Voltaire". Why didn't he say *"once Pope, and since Walter Scott"*?

¹ 1756. The reception of this work by the public did not encourage the publication of the second volume.

Referring to Bowles's "extreme sensibility" Byron tells a story of a surgeon who wore a wig, and who, on a young lieutenant offering to take off his hat, got so angry that he said: Sir, I shall talk no longer with you; you grow scurrilous.

Bowles reminds Byron that the instant his early poems were sent into the world and encountered the rude breath of the critics, his lordship fell foul of critics, poets, statesmen, lords, ladies and.... Mr. Bowles himself among the number: "none received less indulgence". Bowles avails himself of the opportunity to be even with "the gallant and puissant Knight of Westminster" (Hobhouse) for the lines Hobhouse had written on him in the first draft of Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*¹. He pays him back in:

"If snow-white innocence, that from the first
Has foil'd the best defenders, need the worst,
Hobhouse, essay —
Let all the pertness of palav'ring prose
Froth on thy lips, and perch upon thy nose;
Affect a virtue that thou canst not feel,
Clothe faction in the garb of patriot zeal;
Against king, commons, Lords, — and Canning — bray
And do from hate what Santerre did for pay!"

thus adopting the lines, which were really written by Byron himself in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*².

To these lines Hobhouse replied as follows³:

"Should Parson Bowles yourself or friend compare
To some French cut-throat, if you please, Santerre —
Or heap, malignant, on your living head
The smut and trash he pour'd on Pope when dead,
Say what reply — or how with him to deal —
Sot without shame and fool that cannot feel?
You would not parley with a printers' hack —
You cannot cane him, for his coat is black;

¹ See p. 3.

² See p. 3.

³ See memoir of John Murray, vol. 1, p. 421.

Reproof and chastisement are idly spent
 On one who calls a kick a compliment.
 Unwhipp'd, then, leave him to lampoon and lie
 Safe in his parson's guise and infamy."

notwithstanding which mutual kindnesses and compliments Bowles expresses a hope that he shall meet Hobhouse at the next Wiltshire dinner for Charity "with that entire forgetfulness and good humour with which I first met your Lordship, and with which I here drop the pen".

And with this the matter ended between the Rev. W. Lisle Bowles and Lord Byron ¹.

It will not be necessary to go through the whole of McDermot's letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles, as a few quotations will show that this gentleman not only entirely agreed with Lord Byron, but went much farther. Throughout his article, however, he makes a point of not understanding what Mr. Bowles means by "poetical": "You had, no doubt, your own reasons", he says, "for not explaining to your readers the fixed and definite idea which you attached to the term poetical; and had you even been willing to do so, it is still a question whether you were acquainted with it; or whether you attached any certain idea, or association of ideas, to the term at all".

At first he ignores altogether that Bowles has stated distinctly "that the subject and the execution are equally to be considered" and when, towards the end of the article he obviously

¹ On June 14th 1821 Byron writing to Murray, says: "I have read Bowles's answer: I could easily reply, but it would lead to a long discussion, in the course of which I should perhaps lose my temper, which I would rather not do with so civil and forbearing an antagonist. I suppose he will mistake being silent for silenced." (Letters and Journals Vol. V, p. 308.)

And to Thomas Moore on June 22, 1821: Bowles's answers have reached me; but I can't go on disputing for ever, — particularly in a polite manner. I suppose he will take being silent for silenced. He has been so civil that I can't find it in my liver to be facetious with him, — else I had a savage joke or two at his service. (Letters and Journals Vol. V, p. 310.)

perceives that he has overlooked this, he starts a verbal quibble about "to be considered" and "to keep in mind".

He absolutely denies that images or objects are poetical *per se*, but for the rest he agrees with Lord Byron in all the arguments which he has advanced against the invariable principles. What we are to think of Mr. McDermot's logic becomes clear when we read: "In your first proposition you evidently confound the term beautiful and sublime with poetical; for, to say that an object is poetical in proportion as it is sublime and beautiful, is to say, that sublime, beautiful and poetical, are synonymous terms.

He also says to Bowles "You have mistaken the true nature of poetry". Now, if there is one thing that we feel, when reading Bowles's pamphlets (however apt they may be to exasperate by their tiresome iteration) it is that the author has a very clear insight into poetry, that on the whole he is in the right, but that he does not always express himself as concisely as is compatible with clearness of meaning. Bowles's answer to McDermot's article is really addressed to Thomas Campbell who was editor of the *New Monthly Magazine* and probably wrote the review of McDermot's article, March 1, 1822, in the *New Monthly Magazine* in which he expresses as his opinion that: "he (McDermot) has shown, by arguments which will not easily be disproved that poetical images have no abstract existence, whether they be drawn from the works of nature or art; and that all poetical images, from whatever source they are taken are the creatures of the mind, and have their sole existence in the creations, associations and combinations of the poet."

McDermot indeed tries to prove this, and his starting point is:

The sun had risen before we left town,
And we got within sight of the ocean about 5 o'clock.

His reasoning is thus: If these two lines are not poetical, it

is certain, that we may meet with the sun and ocean, and all other abstract poetical images, in a thousand narratives and descriptions, that have not a particle of poetry in them.

"If," he says to Bowles, "you say that that part of the lines is poetical which is occupied by the sun and the ocean, the following lines must be extremely poetical:

The sun, the stars, planets and firmament
Give light to the ocean and the earth.

"You cannot say that they would be poetical, if they were associated in a poetical manner, because this would be to admit, that their poetry depended upon the manner in which they were introduced, not on themselves, which is the very theory Lord Byron supports and to which yours stands directly opposed". And in this way McDermot goes on to prove that in poetry execution is everything, the subject nothing. He comes to the following conclusion: "Whenever a description is poetical, it derives, in all cases whatever, this character from the genius of the poet; which genius you may call manner, execution, treatment, handling, invention, genius or by whatever other term you please". . . . "If the sun be more poetical in one description than another, the difference must arise from the manner in which it is introduced, and therefore the superiority of the one poet over the other arises from his manner, genius etc. and not from the sun or the introduction of it into his poem."

In his opinion "it is verging on idiotism to ascribe any part of the excellency of a poem to the subject".

"Now, if this gentleman," says Bowles, "who, coming forward for the first time ¹, so marvellously to illumine the *New*

¹ In the review of McDermot's letter in the *New Monthly Magazine* the writer refers to it as "his first production" and calls his mode of reasoning perspicuous and acute.

Monthly Magazine, had read a little more, and wrote a little less, and paid a little attention to the subject on which he was writing, he would then have found, by my own admissions, that what I had said nullified one half of his work and stultified the other; and proved, on the whole, that, though he can quibble, he was as destitute of veracity as of common sense".

To show that there are other judges ("as good as you can produce") who have a different opinion on "the subject" of a poem, he adduces some quotations from Dr. Johnson's *Life of Milton*, adding: "can Pope, however exquisite his skill, in respect to any thing he has written be ranked on the same file with this mighty poet? It is almost too absurd to ask the question. Pope's genius is granted, his talents are granted, his execution of what he has done puts this beyond all doubt; but his genius has never undertaken or performed a subject so adapted to higher orders of poetry; and his execution, if these premises be true, though consummate, will only place him eminent in his line; and no more in the same walk with Milton and Shakespeare, than with him whose execution entitled him, among all poets that ever lived to be pronounced the first among the lights of the human mind." And a little further on Bowles says: "These quibbles about the word "poetical", which word, if it affects me, affects Lord Byron also, and in the same degree; and the whole elaborate nonsense which Mr. Campbell calls "an answer", is nullified in a moment, by only remembering that poetical is adapted to poetry."

In a postscript to his letter he gives the following summary of his principles:

1. That there are some objects, both in nature and art, more poetical, that is, more adapted to poetry, than others.
2. That those most adapted will be found among the greatest objects in nature.
3. That, as in external nature there exist objects more susceptible of poetry than others, from their beauty, picturesque

appearance, ideas excited by the contemplation of power etc., etc., so are the higher passions of the heart, including all that affects the imagination, more adapted to poetry than the manners and habits of any particular period.

4. That the subject, whether of an epic poem, or tragedy, or moral epistles, or satire, must be taken into consideration, before the rank of a poet in his art can be determined, let his execution in that rank be what it may.

5. That, be the subject what it may, it must so far depend on the execution, that he who executes, as well as possible, a poem on any subject, would be a better poet than he would be, whose subject was an epic, in which the execution entirely failed.

6. That, if of three poets, one had executed an epic poem, another a tragedy, and the third a most pathetic epistle, or work of exquisite imagination in mock-heroic with satires etc.; and that these three poets had executed their several descriptions of poetry with the same perfection viz. an epic poem, a tragedy, an ode or epistle, or a mock-heroic, or moral essays; that then those who had so executed works like *Paradise Lost*, or dramas like *Macbeth*, *Othello*, the *Tempest*, as you like it etc. would from the nature of the subjects, and equal execution, according to my principles, and the principles in criticism generally admitted and acknowledged, be pronounced the greatest poets; and therefore, that Pope, with all his execution, never could be placed in the same rank with Milton and Shakespeare!

And with this emphatic repetition of his principles the unconquerable Mr. Bowles thought he had defeated his last adversary!¹ In the course of the years 1824/25, however, he had to take up his pen again, in order to defend himself against a new editor of Pope's Works, W. Roscoe. He does so in a series

¹ Bowles's address to Th. Campbell is dated Bremhill March 14, 1822.

of letters, the first of which is addressed to him by an anonymous correspondent, who, at Bowles's request, sends him a few extracts from Roscoe's *Life of Pope*. The letters of his literary friend are dated from Bath.¹

Roscoe in his *Life of Pope* holds that there is no poetry in any subject, except what is called forth by the genius of the poet. Whether objects are poetical must wholly depend upon the powers of the artist by whom they are represented; and as a proof that subjects are made poetical by the genius of poets, he cites: The battle of the Frogs and Mice of Homer; the *Georgics* of Virgil; the Chess play of Vida; the *Syphillis* of Fracastorius, the *Lutrin* of Boileau; the *Rape of the Lock* by Pope; the *Schoolmistress* by Shenstone; the *Task* by Cowper; the *Deserted Village* by Goldsmith; the *Cotter's Saturday Night* by Burns and the humorous and ludicrous compositions of Butler and Swift.

The question is, according to Roscoe, whether Pope has animated the subjects which he chose for his poetry, with the living breath of his own genius. Bowles of course keeps his ground, conceding that moral and satirical poems as treated by Pope, must be infinitely superior in point of poetic excellence, to the highest subjects of poetry treated less perfectly. But he reminds Roscoe of Pope's line, when he wants to place him in the first class of poets with Shakespeare and Spenser:

"Praise undeserved is censure in disguise."

In one of the letters we find the following passage: "We are gravely informed by Mr. Roscoe that there is perhaps no poet, excepting Shakespeare alone, whose works are applicable to so

¹ In his reply Roscoe expresses his opinion that this would-be correspondence is a mere fabrication. Bowles in his *Lessons in Criticism* (which he dedicates to the Rev. R. Warner) calls this a despicable insinuation, which could proceed from none but the basest and meanest of mankind! The Rev. Warner was Bowles's correspondent.

many purposes, or are quoted on so many different occasions, as those of Pope.

"Here then are Mr. Roscoe's distinguishing proofs of poetry!" Bowles compares this with the frequency with which Joe Miller is quoted! As for Roscoe's principle that there is no poetry in any subject, except what is called forth by the genius of the poet, Bowles says that one part of it is a mere truism. Of course there must be a poet to call the poetry forth. And another part of the proposition is a sophism, namely "there is no poetry in any subject". "Strictly speaking, there is not, any more than there is a tune in my fiddle, unless you can bring it out."

Some of the poems mentioned by Roscoe are on "most favourable subjects", says Bowles, and by lengthy quotations from the Task he proves the poetical superiority of "outward" to "in-door" nature! To be brief, Bowles holds on to his principles most tenaciously and to Roscoe's question, "whether Pope is to be degraded to a secondary rank", he simply answers. "No one can be degraded from a rank which he never occupied." It is rather surprising to see Bowles all of a sudden refer to "a late illustrious antagonist, now no more". (letter XVI, last of the series, dated Nov. 5th, 1824). Byron had died on the 19th April. And the style in which Bowles now speaks of Byron, of his conversations (Capt. Medwin's Conversations) and his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* forms a more or less unpleasant contrast with the tone of obsequiousness which pervades his two letters to Lord Byron, in which he would have had ample opportunity to lodge his complaints, if he had wanted to do so.

Byron seems to have spoken of Bowles on one occasion as "one of the same little order of spirits, who has been fussily fishing on for fame, "and is equally waspish and jealous"; and to have wondered "what Coleridge could mean by praising his poetry as he does" ¹.

¹ Byron himself praised Bowles's *Missionary* in the following versicles,

He also seems to have called him a "good fellow for a parson", and to have imagined that he had "set Bowles's *Invariable principles* at rest". "He did attempt an answer, which was no reply", he is reported to have said, "at least no body read it. I believe he applied to me some lines in Shakespeare. A man is very unlucky who has a name that can be punned upon;¹ and his own did not escape. I have been reading Johnson's *Lives* — a book I am very fond of. I look upon him as the profoundest of critics, etc."

There were three editions of Bowles's pamphlets, so "read" they must have been; and nobody will be surprised to hear that Bowles "felt confident that he set the question at rest, that question, whether the arts of man, or the works of God, furnish the loftiest materials for poetry!"

As for Johnson's lives "did it escape Lord Byron what was said there in reference to *Paradise Lost*, a poem, which, considered, with respect to design, may claim the first place, and with respect to performance, the second, among the productions of the human mind."

Whoever were the readers of his pamphlets, Bowles doubts whether Byron had read them himself, before the conversation took place from which the extracts are given here, because he did not quote Shakespeare but Pope!; and Byron would not have forgotten that in answer to his own motto Bowles gave:

which he made at Venice "one sleepless night". They are found in a letter to Thomas Moore, March 25, 1817.

I read the "Christabel",	I read a sheet of "Margret of Anjou"
Very well:	Can you?
I read the "Missionary"	I turned a page of Webster's Waterloo;
Pretty — very	Pooh, Pooh!
I tried at "Idlerim";	I looked at Wordsworth's milk-white
Ahem.	Hillo! ("Rylstone Doe").
	I read "Glenarvon" too by Caro. Lamb
	God damn!

¹ The first of the two mottos to Lord Byron's letter on Bowles is:
„I'll play at Bows with the Sun and Moon!" — (Old song)

'He who plays at 'bowls' must expect 'rubbers'.

"A little spirit fussing after fame," Bowles goes on, "might reply, if it were worth while, that if it is some fame to have beaten Lord Byron on any question it is greater fame to be associated, as he himself has associated me, with such "little spirits" as Wordsworth and Southey." After that Bowles defends himself against Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, quoting a good deal of his own poetry, and concluding "as to fame, whatever mine may be, I would prefer it (with all his — i. e. Byron's — genius) infinitely to his; and I will conclude in the words of his favourite poet, "Oh, grant me honest fame, or grant me none!" In his answer, which is for the greater part devoted to the defence of Pope's moral character, Roscoe contends again that whatever poetry there is to be found in a description depends on the poet and the poet alone. The same prospect will suggest different ideas to different persons, or even to the same poet on another occasion. The description is only a reflection of the state of his own mind at the time. The fact that such an unfavourable subject as "the sofa" has been treated by the poet with so much grace, ease, variety, wit and picturesque effect, evinces more fully the genius of the writer and prevents Roscoe from acceding to Bowles's mediatory proposition, that the subject and the execution should be equally considered, or in other words that the poetry was in the sofa, and the art and talents in the poet. In order to substantiate his opinion he compares Cowper's:

Witness, thou dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth summer I perceive
Fast locked in mine — etc.

and lines, which he wrote after another walk, when he did not enjoy the society of his beloved friend, but brooded over his own melancholy ideas:

Oh happy shades, to me unblest,
 Friendly to peace, but not to me!
 How ill the scene that offers rest,
 And heart that cannot rest, agree!
 etc.

showing that the same subject may present to the poet a different train of reflections, according to his own temper and disposition

He also compares Horace's

*"Diffugere nives, redeunt jam gramina campis
 Arboribusque comae."*

to Cowper's description of the same circumstance:

*"These have been, and these shall be, in their day
 And all this uniform, uncolour'd scene,
 Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,
 And flush into variety again."*

"Had any portion of the poetry been inherent in the subject, per se, what prevented the Roman bard, certainly no inferior artist, from bringing it before us with its full effect?" asks Roscoe. Are we then to draw the conclusion that Horace is inferior to Cowper as a poet? For Roscoe's proposition is that there is no poetry in any object, but what is to be ascribed to the genius of the poet.

"The power of the poet," he says, "extends over all subjects in nature and art; and it is only by a different application of the same faculty, that he undertakes to illustrate one subject in preference to another."

"Neither the painter nor the poet represents objects or passions as they actually exist in nature, but the images of them, as he sees or conceives them in his own mind, and consequently it is these images only which he communicates to the minds of others.

These images, selected from all the works of nature and of

art, the poet arranges, elaborates, and combines, as the bee converts into a new form the substance collected from the flowers." But this is virtually the same thing Bowles maintains. The poetry Bowles ascribes to beautiful and sublime objects in nature is to poets, what the nectar in flowers is to the bee! The poetry is in the object; it depends on the powers of the poet what he makes of it. Roscoe, however, {thinks that he has expressed himself so clearly on this point that he feels confident that "after these explanations" Bowles will not expect him to enter into a discussion of the question, whether "the works of nature are more sublime and therefore more poetical, than works of art". His apiarian simile does not fit his (and McDermot's) principle that there is no poetry in any object, but before passing on to the discussion of Bowles's lines on Gilchrist, he once more distinctly states, that poets can only be classed by the power of their performance; that this is the only criterion by which we are to judge of the relative excellence of the professors of poetry; that poets of the highest class may be found in every department; that the poetry consists in the genius of the poet, and not in the subject on which it is employed.

In the course of his letter Roscoe refers to *the Task* as a poem which proves irrefutably what he lays down in his principles: "I therefore maintain that if any poem could more than another, demonstrate that there is no poetry in any object, but what is to be ascribed, to the genius of the poet, or which could more fully refute the assertion, that the poetry is in the subject, and the art and powers in the poet, it is *the Task* of Cowper; throughout the whole of which, as if for the purpose of proving on what a slight and unimportant foundation so beautiful a superstructure could be raised, the poet has, on circumstances of the most common occurrence, engrafted those numerous passages which give variety and interest to his poem. Such are the representations of Crazy Kate, of the Gipsies,

the Clerical Coxcomb, the Tame Hare, the growing of Cucumbers, the reading of the newspaper, the Woodman and his dog etc." It is this passage which Bowles in his "Lessons in Criticism" quotes, adding: "These affecting and beautiful pieces from the most common circumstances of life that is, from living nature, have no more to do with the sofa than they have to do with the man in the moon." And quoting Cowper's passage on his cucumbers he says: "You must feel it is not equal to the sweet and affecting passages you have quoted for this plain reason, because the subject of the one was more "adapted to poetry" than the other!"

"The subject does signify," he says, "for though it be true, that there is an immense difference between the poetical powers of one man and those of another in using the materials furnished, it is equally a truism, against which you contend with all your might blindfold, brandishing your weapons on this or that side, as it may happen; — not meaning, but blundering round about a meaning, — that Homer could not place in the highest rank of poems Mice; nor Vida chessmen; nor Fracastorius a disease that shall be nameless; nor Cowper cucumbers, nor Pope satires and moral essays, and I affirm that this is no detracting of Pope's genius as a poet, for Homer could not do it, nor Shakespeare, nor Milton!

He gives Roscoe the following passage in Horace to ponder on:

Nec quisquam noceat cupido mihi pacis at ille,
Qui me commovit melius non tangere clamo,
Flebit, et insignis tota cantabitur urbe.

and paraphrases it as follows:

Assail not, as you love your souls,
The "pertinacious" parson Bowles,
For though the cockney critics flout him,
When he is rous'd, he lays about him,
Knocks Roscoe down, and in a trice,
Scatters his wooden men and mice,

"Hitches" the Doctor in a Ditty,
And sings his fame through all the city!

He also gives another parody on the lines in English Bards and Scotch Reviewers¹ which Roscoe quoted in his letter to Bowles

"If Pope, who, from the first,
Needed the best of critics, found the worst!
Roscoe! essay! an injudicious friend,
Alike his virtues and his faults commend;
Hate and revile all those who cannot see
Wisdom and worth in his defects like thee!
Gloss o'er his vengeful hate, his foul delight
In ribaldry, his cunning and his spite!
Bring forth thy "frogs and Mice" and "wooden men".
Fit instances and types, to prove his pen
Can rival Shakespeare: Seize the critic throne,
A Solomon, a second Solomon;
And kick thy feeble foot at parson Bowles
Who, like a fiend, his goggling eyeballs rolls.

(Bowles)

Bowles's poetic vein flowed freely: For Byron's lines:

"Write as if St. John's self could still inspire
And do from hate, what Mallet did for hire!"

he gave:

"Spread o'er thy work a noisome compost vile
Of slaving froth, of drivel and of Bile!"

There's a pastoral for the reader, nor must we forget the lines applied to Bowles as a critic:

Or hadst thou lived in that congenial time
To rave with Dennis, or with Ralph' to rhyme,
Stray'd with the rest around his living head

¹ For the parody addressed to Hobhouse see p. 63.

Nor rais'd thy hoof against the lion dead;
 A meet reward had crown'd thy glorious gains,
 And link'd thee to the Dunciad for thy pains!"
 (Byron)

Listen again — "Thou egregious member of the Della Crusca Society of Florence!" Bowles exclaims,

"Oh! had Apollo, who so justly graced,
 With ass's ears crown'd Midas for his taste!
 Heard thee, in critic lore so skill'd and deep,
 Descant on Cowper's "stercoraceous heap"!
 With kindred clods he would have crown'd thy brains,
 And link'd thee to a dunghill for thy pains.

It will hardly be believed that Mr. Bowles after this calmly announces that he will not say any more; that he will spare Roscoe from respect to his grey hairs and his former fame!!

Bowles is indeed "in splendid form" in these lessons in criticism. Reverting to Roscoe's criticism on Bowles's satire on Gilchrist, he speaks of Roscoe in the following terms:

"him who with a kind of frenzied disappointment that his arguments have been so overthrown, or his sophistries derided, tears the turf from the grave of his friend, to throw at his opponent, with equal anger and impertinence."

Eager to give Roscoe a few lines in return for his long quotation from *the Dunciad*, he says:

"No critic has ever pointed out the remarkable circumstance in Pope's *Essay on the Characters of Men*, that he has very consistently with his subject, introduced two female portraits — Narcissa, and the Old Crone. Suppose then, I beg you to accept only four lines, taking a hint from Pope's *Epistle on the Characters of Men*!"

On Pope's introducing an old woman among the characters of men.

"Pope placed an old woman mid portraits of men —
Hear this, ye bold critics, and tremble;
Because he foresaw that one critic would rise,
Who should most an old woman resemble."

Finally, he comes to the tone of his letters to Byron. "It has been coarsely and falsely said, that I adulated Lord Byron, because he was a Lord!! I treated him with civility, because he was a gentleman, and because he spoke with civility, in his letter to Mr. Murray of me personally! So far from flattering him, if I had written to him a word of flattery, as many did, I could have received his praise, I believe, as readily as his vituperation. I thought it unmanly to write a syllable; but as I did not at any time fear him living, and scorned to flatter him; now his faults are in the grave, and I can have no hope of any courtesy, I conclude with the following tribute to his memory, which is not, inappropriately, I hope, offered to the public in this place."

Childe Harold's Last Pilgrimage.

(Written after having read an account of his funeral).

So ends Childe Harold his last pilgrimage
Above the Malian surge he stood, and cried,
"Liberty!" and the shores from age to age,
Renown'd, and Sparta's woods and rocks, replied,
"Liberty!" but a spectre, at his side,
Stood, mocking — and its dart uplifting high
Smote him — he sunk to earth in life's fair pride,
While Sparta's rocks echoed a fainter cry
And old Ilissus sigh'd — "Die, generous Exile, die!"

I will not ask sad Pity to deplore
His wayward errors, who thus early died;
Still less, Childe Harold — now thou art no more,
Will I speak aught of genius misapplied,
Or the past shadows of thy spleen and pride;
But I will bid th'Arcadian cypress wave,
And pluck the laurel from Peneus' side
And pray thy spirit may such quiet have,
That not one thought unkind be murmur'd o'er thy grave.

So ends Childe Harold his last pilgrimage!
 Ends in that region — in that land renown'd,
 Whose mighty genius lives in Glory's page,
 Upon the Muse's consecrated ground,
 His pale cheek fading, where his brows were bound
 With their unfading wreath! I will not call
 Thy nymphs from Pindus' piny shades profound,
 But strew some flowers upon thy sable pall
 And follow to the grave a Briton's funeral.

Slow move the plumed hearse — the mourning train —
 I mark the long procession with a sigh,
 Silently passing to that village fane,
 Where, Harold, thy forefathers, mouldering lie;
 Where sleeps that mother, who with tearful eye
 Pondering the fortunes of thine onward road,
 Hung o'er the slumbers of thy infancy;
 Who, here, releas'd from every human load,
 Receives her long-lost child to the same calm abode.

Bursting Death's silence — could that mother speak —
 When first the earth was heaped upon thy head,
 In thrilling, but with hollow accent weak,
 She thus might give the welcome of the Dead —
 "Rest, rest! the Passions which the heart misled,
 Here all are hushed: the murmur of Life's sea,
 Here is not heard: Come, to my wormy bed!
 When both shall wake — Father, remember me;
 And, Oh! my son, my son, — have mercy upon thee!"

The writer of the article in the *Quarterly Review* LXIV who, as we saw on p. 13, calls himself a lover of the "good old stock poetry of England", is convinced that he cannot be suspected of wanting due sensibility to the merits of our contemporary poets; because there is scarcely a number of the *Quarterly Review* which has not been "adorned" with specimens of their taste, cultivation or power. But considering "the faults and even the excellencies of those who rank foremost among them; the defects of their feeble and indiscriminate imitations; and still more the demerits of those who have perverted their talents to serve the purposes of corruption and impiety", he is equally

convinced that "this was a juncture" that an appeal might be made to the high name of Pope, and the public be called on to revert to the works of him, who, more than any other poet, united strength of reason with elegance of fancy, and instructed his readers by the moral truth which he taught, while he charmed their attention by the most exquisite pleasures of correct taste.

The grounds on which this writer assigns to Pope exactly the same rank in literature as Bowles awards him, will be best seen in the following extract from his article:

"It remains to estimate the rank to which he and his works have attained:

We do not think the first a difficult question — the two higher orders of poetry, the epic and dramatic, he left entirely untouched; and his essays as a lyrical poet are so few and slight as to require mention only to show that they have not been forgotten. His line was didactic, in the enlarged sense of that word; which includes appeals either principally to the understanding as in satire both grave and ludicrous, or to the emotions and passions, as in elegy, and such epistles as *Eloisa's*, which last, however, approaches nearly to the dramatic, as being in fact, an impassioned, though extended monologue. And, in this order of poetry, there can be no hesitation in pronouncing Pope to be the first of poets. Who is there, in any age or nation, that can pretend to compete with him? Who has combined such powers of reasoning with such splendid fancy? Such concentrated meaning with such melodious verse? Such elegant playfulness with such causticity of wit, such dignified reprehension, and such noble bursts of moral feeling? All these excellencies are in him accompanied with a profusion of imagery, always delighting by aptness of illustration, sometimes by sportiveness and wit, but oftener by its richness and warmth, with a refined delicacy of sentiment and brilliance of expression; and such a variety of elegant phraseology as the language of no other poet, in the same order of poetry, can match.

All these qualities, however, marvellous as the combination is, do not prove that he was capable of the highest efforts of poetic genius: — that his mind possessed the majesty, magnificence and scope of Homer; the sublimity of Milton, ‘wielding the elements’; or the grandeur and profundity of Shakespeare sounding the depths of the human heart, and raising and stilling the passions at his bidding. It is therefore high, perhaps, the very highest in the second class that we rank the poetic genius of Pope. With regard to the place which his works hold in English literature, the question hardly admits, and for any useful purpose does not require, a very precise answer.”

“Though much in the judgment of every individual will depend on that individual’s tastes and sympathies”, the writer continues, “we cannot claim for his works the same power to soften, elevate, or purify the soul, which we confess in Shakespeare, Milton or Spenser; — their strains are of a higher mood.”

Though Bowles triumphantly calls out in “*What is sauce for the goose, is sauce for the gander*”, that his “invariable principles” have weathered every storm, and have arrived safely in port, he cannot conceal his vexation, that this result is attained without a word of acknowledgment to him. Both Warton and Bowles are taken to task by the *Quarterly Review* with regard to their criticism on Pope’s moral character: “Dr. Warton, however, and Mr. Bowles, seem to deny the power of repentance to wash away sins, and will allow neither the poet nor the world to benefit by his better judgment, and the improved delicacy of his (Pope’s) moral feeling.” And again:

“Mr. Bowles, in particular, has industriously sought out the secret depositories of the dregs and thrown them again into the stream,” etc.

“Bowles, Bowles, Bowles in particular,” the poor victim says, “appears in every part of every page, devoted to “particular” vituperation; but not one word of Bowles, and his “invariable principles” of poetry is heard, when the substan-

tiality of all he has contended for so long, — which has been so “pertinaciously” denied, disputed, or evaded, — is suddenly — and without the least thought, as it should seem of “degrading Pope” — conceded!!!

“That,” as the writer in the *Quarterly Review* says, “the disagreement was owing to want of proper definition of the terms” on the part of Mr. Bowles, is of course manifestly absurd. Prosy and full of endless iteration as most of his seven pamphlets are, the reader must be very dense indeed, who, after perusing them, is left in any doubt as to what Bowles means by his principles. They are repeated so often and in so many different forms; illustrated by such an overwhelming mass of examples (however unhappily some of them may have been chosen) that Bowles can hardly be accused of not having properly defined his propositions. No, it would rather seem, as if some of Bowles’s opponents joined issue with him with the set purpose to misunderstand every statement made by him.

His last pamphlet is not the shortest. Besides the question of his invariable principles, forty pages are used to prove that Bufo was meant for Lord Halifax; five more are filled with “a word” on the character of Sappho as applied to Lady M. W. Montague, and another seven pages on the clandestine publication of Pope’s letters. Then follow eight pages of insinuations against Pope’s moral character, with respect to his female connections; and again eight pages of uncharitable insinuations respecting Pope’s conduct to the Misses Blount etc., after which in a conclusion and summary he again enlarges on the matter Bufo—Halifax and at length drops his pen on this controversy.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Prof. Beers in his Chapter on *Coleridge, Bowles, and the Pope Controversy*¹ says: "More important to our inquiries than the poetry of Bowles is the occasion which he gave to the revival, under new conditions, of the Pope Controversy. For it was over the body of Pope that the quarrel between classic and romantic was fought out in England."

The importance of the part which the pamphlets of Bowles and his opponents played in the Pope Controversy, in this struggle between Classicism and Romanticism, should not be exaggerated, however. It is rather doubtful, whether so much fuss would have been made about Bowles's "invariable principles", if he had found occasion to publish them entirely disconnected from any edition of Pope's works. It may be true that the reading public and the critics lagged far behind the poets, and that they still leaned towards the age and the poet that made their influence felt till the beginning of the nineteenth century; but by the time when this petty war broke out, the movement which had been undermining this influence for the greater part of the eighteenth century, had, we may fairly say, culminated, and nobody, not even those who did not sympathise with it, could deny its ascendancy over what the *Quarterly Review* called "the good old stock poetry of England".

In drawing up his principles, Bowles did not, of course, as some of his opponents wanted to make their readers believe,

¹ English Romanticism (XIXth century) p. 63.

proceed with the set purpose to "degrade" Pope; he did not fashion them to his criticism of Pope's poetry; they were the outcome of Thomas Warton's lectures on English Poetry; they were the tangible form of what he and contemporary poets felt, of what the reading public began to feel, with regard to poetical requirements as they had manifested themselves for many years, and of Young's *Conjectures* in original composition. And applying his principles of poetical criticism (for which he acknowledges his indebtedness to Thomas Warton in his *Final Appeal*) to the works of Pope, he could not but assign to Pope the place in literature which he did assign to him.

But even at the time when Bowles's edition of Pope appeared, 1806, this pamphlet war could not possibly have had much influence either one way or the other. It was three years, before the principles were taken any notice of at all, and that was in Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Another ten years were to elapse before Campbell's *Specimens of the British Poets* set the stone rolling. More than twenty years, therefore, had gone by since the appearance of the *Lyrical Ballads*, in which the Romantic aspirations which had been growing in force throughout the eighteenth century found their most complete expression. Like an avalanche, gradually increasing in bulk and strength, at first very slowly, but steadily gaining in rapidity, romanticism finally became a force which nothing could withstand; and those who fought against it, criticized it, and predicted (on so slight a ground as the appearance of two or three editions of Pope) that the public taste would soon be satiated with "the forced meat of modern poetry, and relish again the wholesome viands, that delighted our fathers, and are destined to be the delight of all future generations" must have been blind, purposely, to undeniable facts. Such Pope idolators were obviously ignorant of the fact that even while the fame of classic poetry was at its height the way was being prepared for its overthrow. In 1726 Thomson's *Winter*, and four years later his

complete *Seasons* had appeared, to which we must trace that love and careful observation of external nature which forms one of the characteristics of the Romantic revival at the close of the eighteenth century.

Collins and Gray carried on the revolt. Blank verse, octosyllabic couplets, the Spenserian Stanza¹ were practised and modified; and sources of inspiration and subjects for poetry were sought, far removed from the prevailing themes. And when in 1756 Joseph Warton dared to criticize Pope's poetry, it was a sign that the revolt against the classic school had become definite and conscious.

Macpherson and Chatterton, *the Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, Warton's *History of English Poetry*, Tyrwhitt's edition of *the Canterbury tales* need only be mentioned to show that from that time onward the movement grew in strength and rapidity, and that the face of literature was changing altogether. Cowper, who freed himself from the old style triumphantly, Crabbe who combined features from both periods, Coleridge with Blake and Burns carry us to the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, to the age which is named after the apostle of the romantic movement, the age of Wordsworth, a period unparalleled in English Literary History for rapidity of production, and surpassed only by the Elizabethan age in quality of production. Scott, Byron, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats poured forth such a brilliant mass of poetry as is hardly equalled in English Literature.

The wonder is that at such a time, hundreds and hundreds of pages should have been filled in a vehement controversy upon a matter which, to all intents and purposes, had been conclusively solved by the practice of the last two decades or

¹ De Maar, *History of Modern English Romanticism*, gives a list of nearly 1500 regular Spenserian Stanzas from 1700—1785. See also Ch. II of this work for the influence of Milton, Spenser, Shakespeare throughout the 18th century.

more. The victory of romanticism over classicism was complete; the taste of the reading public was changing. And we feel almost inclined to apply the same words that Bowles addressed to Lord Byron:

"It grieves me much", replied the clerk again,

"Who speaks so well, should ever speak in vain."

Besides Bowles's principles, naturally, did not comprise the whole field of what is called romanticism. To lay down such principles would be as difficult, or rather as impossible a task, as to give an all embracing definition of romanticism. Bowles himself belonged to the class of poets, styled by Byron more or less sneeringly the "naturals"; and it is from his point of view as a "natural" that he drew up his principles.

And, after all, who, and how numerous, were those who took an interest in the controversy that was going on? A few Pope idolators, a few who still clung to old traditions. The circle to which the pro and con of this question appealed was very small, compared to the number of readers on whom the new movement was daily exercising its influence in prose and poetry, looking back contemptuously on the poets of the preceding age that "swayed about upon a rocking-horse, and thought it Pegasus."

Ah! dismal-soul'd!

The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd
 Its gathering waves — ye felt it not. The blue
 Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew
 Of summer night collected still to make
 The morning precious: Beauty was awake!
 Why were ye not awake? But ye were dead
 To things ye knew not of, — were closely wed
 To musty laws lined out with wretched rule
 And compass vile; so that ye taught a school
 Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,
 Till, like the certain wands of Jacob 's wit,
 Their verses tallied. Easy was the task:
 A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
 Of Poesy!

(Keats).

The circle then, in which this petty war raged was small, and would at any time have been small from causes in the pamphlets themselves.

As regards those of the Rev. W. L. Bowles they were of the most unconscionable length and full of almost irritating iteration. And a few of his opponents resorted to vituperation, evidently holding to the opinion: "If you have a bad case, abuse the plaintiff's attorney"; and Bowles followed suit. Why, too, if these principles, which, after all, lay embedded in Bowles's life of Pope for fourteen years before they were published as "invariable" — were of any importance in the struggle of romanticism against classicism, were they allowed to remain unmolested during the most important period in the development of romanticism?

The influence then, which this controversy had on English Literary History, must, in my opinion, not be rated very high. The merest chance — Campbell's *Specimens* — brought Bowles's principles out; the merest chance — the kisses in Madeira — caused Byron to take up his cudgel; and but for his joining in the fray the whole affair might have fallen into oblivion — without any harm to English Literature.

Nevertheless, however unprofitable this controversy may have been on the whole, there is no denying that Bowles showed in his edition of Pope and in his seven pamphlets a true insight into poetry and assigned to Pope his right place in English literature.

THE END.

**Two letters to the Right Honourable Lord Byron
in answer to his letter on the Rev.W. L. Bowles's
strictures on the life and writings of Pope.**

by

THE REV. W. L. BOWLES.

*He that plays at Bowls, must
expect rubbers. (Old Proverb)*

*Naturam expellas furca, tamen
usque recurret. Horace.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

I trust Lord Byron will excuse me for having made somewhat free with the Singular Motto to his Book. It is "I will play at Bowls with the sun and the moon." Old song.

A "certain family" had been spoken of, in the Quarterly Review as "ringing changes on nature for two thousand years."

By a somewhat ludicrous coincidence it happens that the "arms" of this "family" are, literally, a "sun and moon, a sun, or, and a moon, argent, secundum artem.

It is, therefore, with this sun and moon, that Lord Byron, I have no doubt, plays at Bowls! Not with the Sun and Moon in Nature!

In return, I have only ventured to take, as an inscription to my shield, his Lordship's-motto with a trifling alteration. He that plays at Bowls (with the Sun and Moon) must expect rubbers.

Which is only an old proverb, for part of an old song! As for any alteration in his heraldic motto, I should not dare to say, *Ne crede Byron*; but, I think, in this game, I shall take from his Lordship's arms the "supporters"; though I would not, if I could, touch the graceful and glittering crest of his High Poetical Character; and long may he wear it uninjured.

When I have classed Pope, as a Poet, inferior to Milton and Shakespeare, I must beg to be understood, that I do not consider him in the same file with these Poets, nor in any degree to be ranked with them.

Some allowance will be made for the circumstances under which this answer has been brought out; the instances being adduced on the spur of the occasion, under the anxiety that the considerate and impartial, before they decide, with Lord Byron, might at least hear *alteram partem*.

It would be important for the reader to keep in mind one plain distinction, in reading, what is here offered. Whatever is picturesque is so far poetical; but all that is poetical does not require to be "picturesque". Lord Byron would never have said, "What painter does not break the sea with a boat etc.," if he had remembered this distinction.

LETTER I

Mylord,

Horne Tooke, if I remember right, began his well-known letter to Junius, in these words: "Tragedy, Comedy and Farce, — Junius, Wilkes, and Foote, — against one poor parson, are fearful odds". So I might say, Lord Byron, and my two late assailants, — Apollo, Midas, and Punch, — are indeed fearful odds against a country clerk and provincial editor.

But to be more courtly, in approaching your Lordship as a controversialist upon any point, I am well aware of the great talents opposed to me. I have just read your Remarks (addressed to a friend) on my *Life of Pope*, on the first part of my *Vindication in the Pamphleteer* and on my principles of Poetical Criticism, which I had called (foolishly in your Lordship's opinion) invariable.

I thank you, cordially, for this opportunity of explaining my sentiments, which I know you would not intentionally pervert; for the flattering terms in which you have spoken of me personally; and, most of all, for the honourable and open manner in which you have met the questions on which we are at issue.

The late contest in which I have been involved, with those of a character so opposite, has tended to make this contrast of urbanity and honourable opposition more gratifying. From you, my Lord, I was certain I should not meet coarse and insulting abuse, the foul ribaldry of opprobrious contumely, nor the petty chicanery that purposely keeps out of sight one part of an argument, and wilfully misrepresents another.

Your opposition, as might become a person of so high a station and of such distinguished genius, exhibits none of those little arts of literary warfare. Your letter is at once argumentative, manly, good-humoured, and eloquent.

I am afraid, that if those whom I have lately encountered might have thought that "Your Lordship would decide the contest at once", — in short, "hit the nail in the head, and Bowles in the head also", — they will be somewhat disappointed.

But, be this as it may, I can say, with great truth, that if it be an honour to have such a character for an opponent, it is a duty incumbent on me to endeavour to show myself not unworthy, my Lord, of such notice, by meeting your objections in the same spirit.

Your observations, in answer to what I said of parts of *Pope's moral*

character, may be comprised in few words. It was far from my heart to charge him with a "libertine sort of love", on account of the errors or frailties of youth. I disdained in the *Life of Pope*, to make any allusion to Cibber's well-known anecdote. It would have been fanatic or hypocritical in me to have done so. When I spoke of his libertine kind of love, I alluded to the general tone of his language to Lady Mary, and many of the ladies with whom he corresponded from youth to age. I suppressed, with indignation, the imitation of Horace, which I believe he wrote — the most obscene and daring piece of profligacy that ever issued from the press, since the days of Charles the Second. I deduced no trait of his character from it, though it was not written when youth and gaiety might, in some measure, have palliated the offence, but when he was forty-two years of age. But though I had no tincture, I hope, in my feelings, of hypocrisy, or fanaticism, I thought it a duty to society to touch on one prominent feature in his character, which shews itself in his correspondence.

As to the omission of the fact of his benevolence to Savage, it was inadvertence, — culpable, I confess; but Johnson, to the best of my recollection, has also passed it over: and, if I have spoken, of his "general benevolence", I may be pardoned, I hope, for an omission, which, at all events, was not intentional; but on which your Lordship's animadversion I own to be just.

"Should some more sober critic come abroad,
If wrong, I smile; if right, I kiss the rod."

Having touched on these points, I advance to meet your Lordship on the ground of those principles of poetical criticism, by which I adventured to estimate Pope's rank and station in his art.

If I cannot prove those principles invulnerable, even when your Lordship assails them; if I cannot answer all your arguments as plainly and as distinctly as you have adduced them; the appellation "invariable" I shall instantly discard; but saying, — if I fall, it is *Aeneida dextra*.

On the contrary, if meeting any arguments fairly, I turn them against you; if, without avoiding the full force of any, I rebut them satisfactorily; I shall have more reason than ever to think those principles invariable, which even Lord Byron cannot overturn.

It is singular that in the latter part of my vindication from the charges of the *Quarterly Review*, I had quoted your own poetry, my Lord, to prove those very principles which your Lordship's criticism is employed to destroy.

One thing will give me satisfaction. If you, having descended into this contest, comprehend me, I shall not probably be misrepresented by others. But, as much misrepresentation on the subject has taken place, and some misconceptions, from which I think I shall shew that your Lordship

is not exempt; I shall first place before your Lordship, and the public, my sentiments, as they stand recorded in the tenth volume of Pope's works. They are these: (I have often quoted them in part, but I find it, in consequence of so many misconceptions, necessary to transcribe the greater part, that my principles may be seen in connection and under one view). I presume it will be readily granted that "all images drawn from what is beautiful or sublime in the works of nature are more beautiful and sublime than any images drawn from art"; and that they are therefore, *per se*, more poetical.

In like manner, those passions of the human heart which belong to Nature in general, are, *per se*, more adapted to the higher species of Poetry, than those which are derived from incidental and transient Manners. A description of a forest is more poetical than a description of a cultivated garden; and the passions which are pourtrayed in the Epistle of an Eloisa, render such a poem more poetical (whatever might be the difference of merit in point of execution) intrinsically more poetical, than a Poem founded on the characters, incidents and modes of artificial life; for instance, the Rape of the Lock. If this be admitted, the rule by which we would estimate Pope's general poetical character would be obvious.

Let me not, however, be considered as thinking that the subject alone constitutes poetical excellency.

The execution is to be taken into consideration at the same time; for, with Lord Harvey, we might fall a sleep over the "Creation" of Blackmore, but be alive to the touches of animation and satire in Boileau.

The subject, and the execution, therefore, are equally to be considered; — the one respecting the Poetry, — the other the art and powers of the poet. The poetical subject, and the art and talents of the poet, should always be kept in mind; and I imagine it is for want of observing this rule, that so much has been said and so little understood, of the real ground of Pope's character as a poet.

If you say he is not one of the first poets that England, and the polished literature of a polished aera can boast.

*"Recte necne crocos floresque perambulat atti
Fabula fi dubitem clamant periisse pudorem
Cuncti pene patres."*

If you say, that he stands poetically pre-eminent, in the highest sense, you must deny the principles of criticism, which I imagine will be acknowledged by all.

In speaking of the poetical subject, and the powers of execution; with regard to the first, Pope cannot be classed among the highest orders of Poets; with regard to the second, none ever was his superior. It is futile to affect to judge of one composition by the rules of another. To say that Pope, in this sense, is not a poet, is to say that a didactic poem is not a Tragedy,

and that a satire is not an ode. Pope must be judged according to the rank in which he stands, among those of the French school, not the Italian; among those whose delineations are taken more from manners than from nature. When I say that this is his predominant character, I must be insensible to every thing exquisite in Poetry, if I did not except, *instanter*, the Epistle of *Eloisa*: but this can only be considered according to its class; and if I say that it seems to me superior to any other of the kind, to which it might fairly be compared: such as the epistle of Ovid, Propertius, Tibullus (I will not mention Drayton, and Pope's numerous subsequent imitations); but when this transcendent Poem is compared with those which will bear the comparison, I shall not be deemed as giving reluctant praise, when I declare my conviction of its being infinitely superior to every thing of the kind, ancient or modern.

In this poem, therefore, Pope appears on the high ground of the Poet of nature; but this certainly is not his general character. In the particular instance of this poem, how distinguished and superior does he stand! It is sufficient, that nothing of the kind has ever been produced equal to it for pathos, painting and melody.

Before I proceed, it will save myself and your Lordship some trouble, if I request you to remember, in casting your eye on this portion of the estimate of Pope's poetical character, four material points.

1st. I speak not of Nature generally, but of images sublime or beautiful in nature; and if your Lordship had only kept this circumstance in recollection, you would have seen, that your pleasant pictures of "the Hog in the high wind", the footman's livery, the Paddington Canal and the pigsties, the horse-pond, the slop-basin, or any other vessel, all must go for nothing; for natural as these images might be, they are neither "Sublime or beautiful"; and notwithstanding the pleasantry and wit with which they are associated in your Lordship's imagination,

"It grieves me much, the clerk might say again,
Who writes so well, should ever write in vain."

2nd You will observe that the proposition, "Images from what is sublime or beautiful in Nature, *per se*", abstractedly, are connected with what follows, viz. the passions which belong to "Nature" in general, not to Man, as living at one period, but to the human heart in general, to Nature of all ages.

3dly. You will observe, that, in speaking of the subject and execution of a poem, I do not pass over the execution; for otherwise, Blackmore would be a greater poet than Pope: — and if your Lordship had remembered this point, you would not have supposed I could ever consider Fenton, or any other tragedian of the kind, as great a poet as Pope, though Fenton wrote a successful tragedy, and Pope, satires etc.

And 4thly. You will observe, that, in execution I think no poet wa

ever superior to Pope; though your Lordship thinks the execution all, and I do not, for reasons which will be given.

I now beg to place before you what follows, requesting you to observe that I most freely admit Pope's unquestioned rank in the pathetic part of poetry, concerning which my concluding remark was, — "In the particular instance of this poem, how distinguished and superior does he stand. It is sufficient that nothing of the kind ever has been produced, equal to it for pathos, painting and melody!"

To the first part I called Mr. Campbells particular attention before; but I am certain many mistakes would be prevented, if any opposer of another's opinion would only take the trouble to do him the justice of impartially examining what those opinions are. I therefore think it necessary, before I meet Lord Byron, to shew where his most effective strokes seem to hit the hardest, and where they are wasted, not on my theory but on the winds. I must hope, therefore, the reader will a little farther follow me. After the word "melody" my observations on Pope's poetical character proceed as follows:

From this exquisite performance, which seems to stand as the boundary between the Poetry derived from the great and primary feelings of nature, and that derived from Art, to Satire, whose subject wholly concerns existing manners, the transition is easy, but the idea painful. Nevertheless as Pope has chosen to write Satires and Epistles, they must be compared, not as Warton has, I think, injudiciously done with pieces of genuine Poetry, but only with things of the Same kind, to say that the beginning of one of Pope's satires is not poetical; to say that you cannot find in it, if the words are transposed, the "*disjecti membra poetæ*", — is not criticism. The province of satire is totally wide; its career is an artificial life; and therefore to say that satire is not Poetry, is to say an epigram is not an elegy. Pope had written satires; that is, confined himself chiefly, as a poet, to those subjects with which, as it has been seen; he was most conversant; subjects taken from living man, from habits and manners, more than from principles and passions.

The career, therefore, which he opened to himself was in the second order in Poetry; but it was a line pursued by Horace, Juvenal, Dryden, Boileau; and if in that line he stands the highest; upon these grounds we might fairly say, with Johnson" it is superfluous to ask whether Pope were a poet."

From the poetry, which, while it deals in local manners, exhibits also, as far as the subject would admit, the most exquisite embellishments of fancy, such as the machinery of the Rape of the Lock, we may proceed to those subjects, which concern living man.

The abstract philosophical view is first presented, as in the Essay on man. The ground of such a poem is philosophy, not poetry: the poetry is only the colouring, if I may say so; and to the colouring the eye is chiefly

attentive. We hardly think of the Philosophy, whether it is good or bad; whether it is profound or specious; whether it evinces deep thinking, or exhibit only in new and pompous array the "babble of the Nurse".

Scarcely any one, till a controversy was raised, thought of the doctrines; but a thousand must have been warmed by the pictures, the addresses, the sublime interspersions of description, and the nice and harmonious precision of every word and of almost every line. Whether, as a system of Philosophy, it inculcated Fate or not, no one paused to inquire; but every eye read a thousand times, and every lip, perhaps, repeated.

"Lo, the poor Indian! etc.

"The lamb, thy riot", etc.

"O Happiness!" etc.

and many other passages.

All these illustrative and secondary images are painted from the source of genuine poetry, from nature not from Art. They, therefore, independent of powers displayed in the versification, raise the *Essay on Man*, considered in the abstract, into *genuine poetry*; although the poetical part is subservient to the philosophical.

The Moral Essays depart much farther from Poetry so defined, as they exhibit particular casts and characters of Man, according to different habits of existing society; that is, of artificial life.

Pope, however, apparently leaves habits and manners, and reverts to general nature, when he talks of a passion,

"That, like Aaron's serpent, swallows all the rest:
The ruling passion."

There is no reason to suppose that Pope, of the general internal feelings of Nature, could be more ignorant, or less capable of portraying them by vividness of expression and colours, than others; but we must estimate what he has done not what he might have done. Many, perhaps, may regret with me, that if he disdained,

"... in Fancy's fields to wander long,
"But stooped to Truth, and moralised his song;"

that he had not at least wandered somewhat longer among scenes that were congenial to the feelings of every heart; and that he should leave them for the thorns and briars of ineffectual satire and bitterness, quitting for these such scenes as

"The Paraclete's white walls and silver springs;"

like his great predecessor in Poetry, Milton, who left the "Pastures of Pe-neus, and the Pines of Aetna," to write *Tetrachordon*, and to mingle in the malignant and puritanical turbulence of the times.

When we speak of the poetical character, derived from passions of general Nature, two obvious distinctions must occur, without regard to Aristotle; — those which, derived from the passions, may be called pathetic, and those which, derived from the same source, may be called sublime.

Of the pathetic, no one (considering the Epistle of Eloisa alone) has touched the chord so tenderly, so pathetically, and so melodiously.

As far as this goes, Pope, therefore in poetical and musical expression, has no competitor.

We will now proceed to consider those passions which are equally the subject of genuine poetry, and on which are founded (I do not say, Epic or Tragic excellence, for these Pope declined) but that species of poetic sublimity, which gives life and animation to the Ode.

In this respect, I believe, no one who ever thought of Alexander's Feast, or the Bard of Gray, could for a moment imagine Pope pre-eminent. Before these he sinks, as much as any other writer, whose subject was pathetic, sinks before him. His odes for the Duke of Buckingham, though elegant, are wholly unworthy to be classed as the compositions of a superior Lyric Poet.

In what has been said, I have avoided the introduction of picturesque description; that is, accurate representations from external objects of Nature: but if the premises laid down in the commencement of these reflections are true, no one can stand pre-eminent as a great poet, unless he has not only a heart susceptible of the most pathetic or most exalted feelings of Nature, but an eye attentive to, and familiar with, every external appearance that she may exhibit, in every change of season, every variation of light and shade, every rock, every tree, every leaf, in her solitary places. He who has not an eye to observe these, and who cannot with a glance distinguish every diversity of every hue in her variety of beauties, must so far be deficient in one of the essential qualities of a poet.

Here Pope, from infirmities, and from physical causes, was particularly deficient. When he left his own laurel circus at Twickenham, he was lifted into his chariot or his barge; and with weak eyes and tottering strength, it is physically impossible he could be a descriptive Bard.

Where description has been introduced among his poems, as far as his observation could go, he excelled; more could not be expected. In the description of the Cloister, the scenes surrounding the melancholy convent, as far as could be gained by books, or suggested by imagination, he was eminently successful; but even here, perhaps, he only proved that he could not go far: and

"The streams that shine between the hills,
The grotts that echo to the tinkling rills".

were possibly transcripts of what he could most easily transcribe, — his own views and scenery.

But how different, how minute is his description, when he describes what he is master of: for instance, the game of Ombre, in the Rape of the Lock? This is from artificial life; and with artificial life, from his infirmities, he must have been chiefly conversant: But if he had been gifted with the same powers of observing outward nature, I have no doubt he would have evinced as much accuracy in describing the appropriate and peculiar beauties, such as Nature exhibits in the Forest, where he lived, as he was able to describe, in a manner so novel, and with colours so vivid, a Game of Cards.

It is for this reason, that his Windsor Forest and his pastorals, must ever appear so defective to a lover of Nature.

Pope, therefore, wisely left this part of his art, which Thomson, and many other Poets since his time, have cultivated with so much more success, and turned to what he calls the "Moral" of the Song.

I need not go regularly over his works; but I think they may be generally divided under the heads I have mentioned:

Pathetic,
Sublime,
Descriptive,
Moral,
Satirical.

In the pathetic, poetically considered, he stands highest; in the sublime, he is deficient, in descriptions from Nature, for reasons given, still more so. He therefore pursued that path in poetry, which was more congenial to his powers, and in which he has shone without a rival.

We regret that we have little more, truly pathetic, from his pen, than the Epistle to Eloisa, the Elegy to the Unfortunate lady and let me not forget one of the sweetest and most melodious of his pathetic effusions, the address to Lord Oxford:

"Such were the notes thy once-loved Poet sung".

With the exception of these, and the Prologue to Cato, there are few things in Pope, of the order I have mentioned, to which the recollection recurs with particular tenderness and delight.

When he left these regions, to unite the most exquisite machinery of fancy with the descriptions of artificial life, the Rape of the Lock will, first and last, present itself; — a composition as Johnson justly observes, the most elegant, the most airy of all his works; a composition, to which it will be in vain to compare anything of the kind. He stands alone, unrivalled, and possibly never to be rivalled. All Pope's successful labour of correct and musical versification, all his talents of accurate description, though in an inferior province of Poetry, are here consummately displayed; and as far as artificial life, that is, Manners, not Passions, are capable of being rendered poetical, they are here rendered so, by

the fancy, the propriety the elegance, and the poetic beauty of the Sylphic machinery

This delightful poem, as I have said, appears to stand conspicuous and beautiful, in that medium where poetry begins to leave nature, and approximates to local manners.

The muse has indeed, no longer her great characteristic attributes, pathos or sublimity; but she appears so interesting, that we almost doubt whether the garb of elegant refinement is not as captivating, as the most beautiful appearances of Nature.

I have placed before the public, in one point of view, the greater part of what I advanced as the ground-work of my judgment on Pope's poetry; and I can ask whether they observe any symptoms of detraction or depreciation? I have spoken of the sublime, the pathetic, the moral, the satirical, and the descriptive, in poetry, putting the descriptive province last.

Now in your letter, my Lord, you have said nothing of the sublime of poetry, as distinguishing the great poet, whose eminence in his art has led to this discussion; but I affirm, that in the pathetic, as he yields, (and the distance is great). to Shakespeare, the variety of pathos in Shakespeare, being considered; yet, if we view Pope's poems together, and remark his consummate execution of all he performed, though he is inferior to Milton, and must be so, from the superior grandeur of Milton's subject, the greater exertion of talents required, "*according to the universal consent of critics*", and the equal execution; yet in one particular branch of his art, sublimity, he yields to Dryden, as well as to these great poets; and in another particular branch of his art, the accurate representation of picturesque imagery from external nature, he yields to Thomson and Cowper.

As to sublimity, you will see I have spoken of his Ode, compared with one of Dryden's. Will you venture to say, the Ode for music by Pope is equal to the Ode for music by Dryden, Alexander's Feast, or that ode spoken of so enthusiastically by Dr. Johnson? I think you will hardly do this; and if you do, I believe, mylord, no critic in England, or Europe, will agree with you.

I must here make one observation on Dryden's Ode on the death of Mrs. Killigrew. Johnson speaks of the first stanza as full of enthusiasm, but his criticism is very unappropriate. I will venture to point out one great cause of its sublimity. Addressing the departing spirit, the poet exclaims:

"Whether adopted to some neighbouring star,
 "Thou roll'st above us in thy wand'ring race,
 "Or, in procession fixed and regular,
 "Movest with the Heav'ns' Majestic Pace".

These are the images from the sublime of Nature, which give this ode its exalted character. I shall quote the first lines:

"Thou youngest virgin daughter of the skies,
 "Made in the last promotion of the blest;
 "Whose palms, new plucked from Paradise,
 "In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
 "Rich with immortal green above the rest:
 "Whether adopted to some neighbouring star,
 "Thou roll'st above us in thy wandering race,
 "Or, in procession fixed and regular,
 "Movest with the heav'ns' majestic pace;
 "Or, called to more superior bliss,
 "Thou tread'st with seraphims the vast abyss;
 "Whatever happy region is thy place,
 "Cease thy celestial song a little space."

Now take a stanza of a quite opposite character.

"Thy sylvan scenes of herds and flocks,
 "And fruitful plains, and barren rocks;
 "Of shallow brooks that flow'd so clear
 "The bottom did the top appear;
 "Of deeper, too, and ampler floods,
 "Which as in mirrors shew'd the woods;
 "Of lofty trees, with sacred shades,
 "And perspectives of pleasant glades
 "Where nymphs of brightest form appear
 "And shaggy satyrs standing near
 "Which then at once admire and fear.
 "The ruins too of some majestic place,
 "Boasting the power of ancient Rome or Greece,
 "Whose statues, friends, columns, broken lie,
 "And, though defac'd, the wonder of the eye;
 "What nature, art, bold fiction ere durst frame,
 "Her forming hand gave feature to the name."

The commencement is lofty and majestic, and the execution goes on *pari passu* with the subject; and the subject is from the most glorious objects of contemplation in Nature. In the other stanza quoted, observe that the lady's art in painting as well as poetry is set before us, and this is done by making the subject of her pictures appear as in the living landscapes of nature:

"The shallow brooks that flow'd so clear, etc.
 "Of deeper, too, and ampler floods,
 "Which as in mirrors shew'd the woods;
 "The perspectives of pleasant glades,
 "Where nymphs of brightest form appear,
 And shaggy satyrs etc.

Then the picturesque ruins are presented.

"The ruins too of *Some majestic place*,
 "Boasting the pow'r of *ancient Rome or Greece*
 "Whose statues, friends, columns, broken lie etc.

Dr. Johnson says, "the other stanzas are very "inferior, — inferior indeed: "and why are these superior? for this reason, because the highest views of human contemplation are opened in the first stanza, picturesque beauty in the last, and both according to nature.

The conclusion of this ode is in the high strain of the beginning; and yet, as objects of artificial life are less poetical than passions which belong to general nature, the mind hardly admits the idea of "the last promotion", in the first stanza, or the word "assizes", relating to the great day of judgment, in the last; because with the expression "assizes" are associated the ideas of artificial life, the "judges coach", and the javelin men.

I will now only request your Lordship to keep in mind what has been laid down: that art is poetical, but nature, in her sublime or beautiful features, with all their kindred associations, more so; that art, in its combined appearances, is most poetical, when connected with associations or views of nature, and always, and under all circumstances, poetical (unless the image be vulgar), when associated with emotions and passions of the human heart.

These are my premises: and having laid them down such as they cannot but be inferred from my general observations, unless garbled, I come to meet your Lordship on the fair ground of controversy.

On the subject of Pope's poetical character we agree. You say he is inferior to Milton and Shakespeare. This is all I asked. But the subject of our present discussion is, I think, at all events, interesting. I have received much pleasure from your Lordship's letter; and though I well know your great powers, I feel, after a more vulgar contest, as "breathing a freer air."

The first question is, "whether images from what is sublime or beautiful in art or nature, be per se, the most poetical."

Upon this first point we join issue, and stand opposed. You have taken this first axiom, which I thought, if well considered, would not be contended and have, without periphrasis, promptly and powerfully opposed it. But remark, this is only the first part of a general proposition, as will be seen

by, referring to what I have said. The other part will be, perhaps, more clearly explained, as we proceed. But first of the first.

Launch of the Beautiful ship, Campbell.

It must here be observed, that in answer to the first part of my proposition, Mr. Campbell instanced the launch of a ship, as a work of art, beautifully poetical. My answer, *taking his own description* was, that the ship so beautifully described by him was more indebted to nature than to art. It was indebted to nature for the winds, that filled the sails; for the sunshine, that touched them with light; for the waves, on which it so triumphantly rode; for the associated ideas of the distant regions of the earth it was to visit, the tempest it was to encounter, and for being, as it were, endued with existence, "a thing of life" ¹).

¹ An attempt has lately been made to rob your Lordship of much of your originality as a Poet. I have seen some extracts from a publication of this kind. Some of the examples are like the description of Monmouth." Why is Macedon like Monmouth? because there is a river in Monmouth, and a river in Macedon." I thought of devoting a few hours in shewing the unfairness of some of these instances: but I know you would say, "What, Bowles, defending me! non defensoribus istis!" The beautiful image of the "ship" in the Corsair.

"That seems to walk the waves — a thing of life!"

which would not be necessary for your Lordship to add, unless an image from nature was more beautiful than any you brought in the description of a ship from art: this "living ship, however, has been traced to Wilson", who has also a "living ship of loveliness".

I forget the words; but if the image is to be taken from your Lordship *vi et armis*, I may as well make my demand: for in the poem, which, together with its unfortunate writer, formed part of your satire, is the following description of "a ship" on her way:

"The tall ship,

"That, like a stately swan, in conscious pride,

"Breaks beautiful, the rising surge, and throws

"The gather'd waves back, and seems to move

"A living thing, upon its lucid way,

"Streaming in lovely glory to the morn."

The idea is the same: I objected to the words "lovely glory;" but somebody persuaded me to let them stay. But I do not believe that either your Lordship, or Mr. Wilson, borrowed from me; albeit, though, so to be told, your Lordship might smile.

I believe no mind, inclined to poetry, ever saw a ship in full sail, but has felt the propriety of the image.

I think what was said was an answer to Mr. Campbell, and *I think so still*. What other arguments he might advance I know not. His ship, as described by himself, in my opinion, totally failed; and I believe Mr. Campbell saw, upon reflection, that his new-launched ship, and even if it had braved for a thousand years,

"The Battle and the Breeze",

must have surrendered.

Mr. Campbell declined, at least, further contest; whether because he would not, or because he thought he could not, is of no consequence, Your Lordship implies that he would not; I am bold to say he could not; and I am bolder to say, I think even your Lordship cannot.

Under its new, and gallant, and dauntless, and experienced, and noble Captain, the battle is now to be fought again. And though years have made some impression, and different tracks of study have taken me far away from the scene of such discussions, and even desuetude from such contest be something, and disinclination more; yet, my Lord,

"Maugre your youth, strength, fortune, eminence",

not unconscious of your powers, but more conscious of the soundness of my cause, I venture to meet you.

Before I examine your arguments, my first object will be to do them *perfect justice*, to place them in their full force, and not only to do so, but, if I doubt the meaning, to give the *substance* in my own language, that it may be seen whether I perfectly understand them or not.

This, I think, due to everyone, whose sentiments I might be called upon to oppose, more especially due to a person like your Lordship; and if such fairness, or anything like such fairness, had been used towards me; I should not have been assailed by so many flippant fallacies, so many gross and palpable perversions.

The substance of your arguments, detached from the jokes, I conceive to be as follows.

The ship gives as much beauty to the waters as it receives from them. If the sun were taken away, what then? The ship, if I understand your Lordship, would not be seen. If Mr. Bowles's pamphlet was not read by the light of the sun, it must be read by candle-light! Allow me to substitute for Mr. Bowles's pamphlet Lord Byron's poems. No beauty is added to them by the sun; for whether they are read by sun-light or candle-

I take this opportunity of thanking your Lordship for remembering the little anecdote, which I mentioned merely for the sake of shewing the disadvantage of implicitly relying on the Reviews.

Your recollection is better than mine. But the mode in which the circumstance had been commended on, was *gratuitously ill-natured*, for it had nothing to do with the criticism.

light, they are equally beautiful. I have read them by both: But the sun adds beauty to a ship; therefore this argument, which I think must be written by candle-light, does not hold; for it is as clear as "the sun at noon-day", that "the sun" neither gives nor takes from the beauty of Lord Byron's poems, let them be read where they will; but it does give beauty, essential beauty, to the ship.

2d. Thousands of people went to see the launch of the ship, who would not look upon the sea, particularly as it was calm, and calm water might be seen in the London Dock, Paddington Canal, a horse-pond, a slop-basin, or in any other vessel!

3d. The wind that filled the sails of the ship might be heard through the chinks of a pigsty; and the sun might shine on a brass warmingpan!

This, I conceive, my Lord, is the substance of your argument; which, if it had come from any but yourself, I should have thought scarcely worth answering: as an argument, the bare statement almost confutes it. The least *fair discussion* will shatter it to rags, reduce it to the *blue bunting* of which the streamer of the ship is composed, and I had almost said, "make it fit to be consigned to that *other vessel*", whatever it be, which has so *facetiously* entered your Lordship's high poetical *imagination*. Allow me first to shew you what you have *not* done, before I examine what you have done, by way of argument.

You have not answered, nor attempted to answer, all the arguments which have been already brought forward on this occasion.

Mr. Campbell, in his description of the ship, spoke not only of the effect of the sun, the seas, and the wind, but added other ideas; its visiting the remote parts of the earth, the tempests it might encounter, and described it, in his poetical vision, "a thing of life". I said "the ideas of its visiting distant regions were ideas from nature," which conspire to make this sight more interesting to the poet's thoughts, and therefore more "poetical".

These you have not touched; and I am sure, if you had, and could bring no arguments but from Paddington Canal, etc. my "fortress" would not have much to fear from your Lordship's somewhat grotesque battery. Whatever motive Mr. Campbell had for not defending his own Seventy-four, I think your Lordship, in argument at least, has not succeeded, however delightful your publication may be in other respects. And now, my Lord, to point our guns, to open our fire, and endeavour to blow your pig-sties, brass warming-pans, and that other vessel, into shatters. But, let me be fair; let the reader compare what you advance with the Substance I have given.

"Mr. Bowles asserts, that Campbell's "ship of the Line" derives all its poetry not from "art", but from "nature". "Take away the waves, the winds, the sun etc. etc. One will become a stripe of blue bunting; and the other a piece of coarse canvas on three tall poles." Very true, take away the waves, the winds, and there will be no ship at all, not only

for poetical, but for any other purpose; and take away the sun, and we must read Mr. Bowles's pamphlet by candle-light. But the "poetry" of the "ship" does *not* depend on the waves" etc.; on the contrary, the "ship of the Line" confers its own poetry upon the waters and heightens *theirs*; I do not deny that the "waves and winds", and above all "the sun" are highly poetical; we know it to our cost, by the many descriptions of them in verse: but if the waves bore only the foam upon their bosoms, if the winds wafted only the sea-weed to the shore, if the sun shone neither upon pyramids, nor fleets, nor fortresses, would its beams be equally poetical? I think not: the poetry is at least reciprocal. Take away "the ship of the Line" "swinging round" the "calm water", and the calm water becomes a somewhat monotonous thing to look at, particularly, if not transparently clear; witness the thousands who pass by without looking on at all. What was it attracted the thousands to the launch? they might have seen the poetical "calm water" at Wapping, or in the "London Dock" or in the Paddington Canal, or in a horse-pond, or in a slop-basin, or in any other vase. They might have heard the poetical winds howling through the chinks of a pigsty, or the garret window; they might have seen the sun shining on a footman's livery, or on a brass warming-pan; but could the "calm water" or "the wind" or "the sun", make all, or any of these poetical!" I think not. Mr. Bowles admits "the ship" to be poetical but only from those accessories; now if they *confer* poetry so as to make one thing poetical they would make other things poetical; the more so, as Mr. Bowles calls "a ship of the line" without them, that is to say, its "masts and sails and streamers", "blue bunting", and "course canvas", and "tall poles". So they are; and porcelain is clay, and man is dust, and flesh is grass, and yet the two latter at least are the subjects of much poesy."

The commencement, my Lord, is ominous. Mr. Bowles never said, nor is it consistent with the principles he has adopted to say, Mr. Campbell's ship *derives* all its poetry from nature.

If this misstatement, in principio, was intentional, I need not have appealed to you for my character of candour.

Mr. Bowles said, and says, "that poetical beauty in a ship" depends not on art but nature". All its poetry, he instantly admits, it does not derive from nature; but its poetical beauty *depends* upon nature; for the sails would not swell, the streamers would not flow, the motion would cease — its life, which Mr. Campbell speaks of, would be extinct.

But you say the poetry of the ship does not *depend* on the waves etc. I think it does, for this reason, — that all this beauty, motion, and life, would be at once lost and extinct. True, nor can I for a moment think otherwise; thus seen, and thus associated, "the ship confers its own poetry upon the "waters, and heightens theirs", but not before the *elements*

of nature have enabled it to do so; and, therefore, its primary poetical beauty depends on nature, not art.

You say, take away the winds and waves, and there will be no ship at all! Then its *very existence depends* on them! And "take away the sun, and you must read Mr. Bowles's pamphlet by candle-light." Read it how or when you will, the sun will be more poetical than a candle; and the seas, that "speak in the east and the west" at once, will not depend on the ship for poetical sublimity, (but the ship will on them), any more than the sun will *depend* upon Lord B.'s poetry. And then I ask you, my Lord, this question, (begging you to remember my principles only require that the works of nature, which are beautiful and sublime, are *more poetical, abstractedly* than any works of art,) — whether the sun, the waves, and winds are, *per se*, more poetical without the ship or the ship, *per se*, without the waves etc.

The poetry, therefore, is not reciprocal; for the ship can give no beauty till the elements of nature, on which its beauty depends, enable it to do to. Then it gives and receives. But, my Lord, you must remember, that when I answered Mr. Campbell (and I do not think either he or your Lordship can make my good ship surrender,) he made no distinction at all, but coloured his rich descriptions with all the hues of nature, and then advanced to shew the poetical beauties of art.

But the water is *calm*, and its monotony requires to be broken; and this "calmness", which is one feature of this mighty element, may be contemplated at Wapping, in the London Dock, Paddington Canal, a horse-pond, or any other vessel!

No: for though the water at Wapping, the London Dock, in the Paddington Canal, a horse-pond or any other vessel, be calm, it is *not poetical*. But your argument is this." The sea is calm; the water in a horse-pond, or any other vessel, is calm; therefore the calm water in a horse-pond is as poetical as the sea!" No, my Lord:

for the sea cannot be made unpoetical, and your great powers cannot make the water in a horse-pond, or any other vessel, poetical: and I will conclude with Cowper's description of the calm sea, whom, however, you call no poet, and whom I think an original, pathetic, and great poet.

"Ocean exhibits, fathomless and broad,

"Much of the *power* and *Majesty of God!*

"He swathes about the swelling of the deep,

"That shines and rests, as infants smile & sleep.

"Vast as it is, it answers, as it flows,

"The breathings of the lightest air that blows.

"Curling and whitening over all the waste,

"The rising waves obey the increasing blast".

But we must stop, before the storm comes on, for I wish only to shew

how this "monotonous" object can, in its calmest state, and without a single ship, or any accompaniments, be rendered poetical. In fact, it does not seem to me, that your Lordship makes distinction between the sea in painting, and the sea in poetry. "The sun is poetical", by your Lordship's admission; and to *our cost*, you say, by the many descriptions in verse. To which sentence I do not accede, as we possibly might have lost some of your own most beautiful descriptions. But to follow your argument.

"If the waves bore only foam upon their bosoms; if the winds wafted only sea-weed to the shore; if the sun shone neither upon pyramids, nor fleets, nor fortresses, would its beams be equally poetical?" Answer: —

The sun would be equally poetical, let it shine on what it may. If the waves bore only foam upon their bosoms, the ocean would be equally sublime, far from every track of vessel, every intrusion of man.

The ocean, I affirm, wants not the accessories of any thing human to make it sublime, and therefore poetical. It is poetical, though not equally picturesque or beautiful, with or without them. The ideas it excites of Almighty Power are those of sublimity, the highest poetical sublimity, which proudly rejects any associations or accessories of human art, or of human kind, to make it more so. "*The deep uttereth his voice*", is one of the most sublime of the many sublime passages relating to it in the scriptures. We have no occasion to make it *more* poetical to say: "there go the ships"; but the ship, moving beautiful to the sight, and almost seeming, as it were, a creature of the vast element, and made doubly interesting, as an object of beauty, by those accessories of nature, without which it is nothing; a ship so seen adds to the *picture of poetical* beauty, but not to the more awful ideas of sublimity, which are far *more poetical*. In sunshine, in calm, in tempest, by night, by day, in its *deepest solitude* it wants nothing of art to make it *sublime*, as speaking everywhere, "in the east and in the west", in the north and the south, with one everlasting voice, 'Infinite and Power'.

What can be more sublime than this verse of the Psalmist? "If I take the wing of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me."

The studies of my profession have carried me to the consideration of all the ancient heresies. The Valentinian Creed proclaims, "In the beginning was depth, and silence!"¹ Endless space, and eternal silence! and these ideas alone are *sublime*. How directly and gloriously opposed to this idea is the opening of the gospel of St. John. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And sublime as the former ideas may be, because they are connected with *terror*, the passage from St. John is far more striking; seeming like an echo

¹ These ideas in the Valentinian Creed were personified.

to the words, "And God said, Let there be Light: and there was Light!" — a 'God, and a creator, and a Saviour revealed.

I hope, as your Lordship, in your pamphlet, professes so great a regard for ethics, and ethic poetry, in which I most cordially agree, this observation will be excused.

To return: "if the waves bore only foam upon their bosoms;" "if the winds wafted only seaweed to the shore;" — "if the sun had neither pyramids, nor fleets, nor fortresses, to shine upon;" if it shone upon none of the emmets of earth, man, or his little works; it would be equally a stupendous object, in the visible creation, per se, abstractedly, and equally sublime; and it would be poetical, equally poetical, whether it shone on pyramids or posts, fortresses or "*pigsties*", a "brass warming-pan, or a footman's livery", though neither pigsties or posts *could be* sublime or beautiful, with or without it.

Pyramids, I repeat, are *most poetical* from associations; and fortresses also; but brass warming-pans are images of *in-door* nature, and footmen's liveries are images of "artificial" life; and to say, that, because the sun can make one object poetical, it must necessarily make another so, is *not* an argument worthy of Lord Byron; and I am afraid we must say of the "sun" shining upon your warmingpan" and "footman's livery", as of the hog in a high wind,"

"It grieves me much, replied the Clerk again,

"Who speaks so well, should ever speak in vain."

But how much genuine poetry is condensed in one line, where a ship is spoken of,

"Sailing in sunshine, far away!"

As for the sun on Mr. Campbell's ship, if the ship did not want the sun, to give it more poetical interest, why did Mr. Campbell think it necessary to introduce the sun at all? "But the ship *gives*, as well as it *receives*: "so seen, it gives beauty, animating beauty, to the seas, not to the sun. It gives back, indeed, and amply repays what it receives; but does a brass warming-pan give back any poetical beauty?

The sun shines white upon the rocks!" The sun shines *white* upon the warming-pan: and so the sun shines on Dr. Syntax's wig; but try the effect,

"Pale on the lone tower falls the evening beam."

Pale on my gray wig falls the evening beam. Therefore Mr. Campbell introduced the sun needlessly, if it did not make the ship more poetical; but though the ship (being itself especially so adorned, as if it came and went Nature's chief favourite and delight among the works of art) gives, as well as it receives, beauty, a footman's livery does not do so, my Lord, any more than an old wig, upon which the sun equally shines, as on the Hellespont, or the crest of Hector.

As to seas without a ship, or with a ship upon the stocks, I appeal to our friend Crabbe. He is my neighbour; and though we scarce ever talk of criticism, in his absence I may venture to quote a little from a poem of his, as the description bears on the point; and your Lordship does not, I believe, reckon him among those whom you are pleased to call "Naturals". He describes the sea in such a manner as I think might rival the greatest poet that ever lived. He shall give us the sea *without a ship*; and what is more to the purpose, a ship on the stocks!

"The sea without a ship."

"With ceaseless motion comes and goes the tide,

"Flowing it fills the channel vast and wide;

"Then back to sea with strong majestic sweep

"It rolls, in ebb, yet terrible and deep!"

I need not point out to your Lordship the effect of the metre, and the imagery:

"Then back to sea with strong majestic sweep

"It rolls."

Next we have a little art.

"Here samphire banks, and salt-wort bound the flood,
Here stakes" etc.

I will leave Crabbe a moment; and as your Lordship seems to think, (mistaking, it appears to me, the poetical for the picturesque,) that the sea is more poetical (more picturesque it certainly is) with ships than without them. I will take an exquisite picture, which you may possibly recognise.

"He that has sailed upon the dark blue sea,

"Has viewed at times, I ween, a full fair sight,

"When the fresh breeze is fair as breeze may be,

"The white sail set, the gallant frigate tight;

"Masts, spires, and strand retiring to the right,

"The glorious main expanding o'er the bow,

"The convoy spread like wild swans in their flight,

"The dullest sailer wearing bravely now,

"So gaily curl the waves before each dashing prow."

(Childe Harold).

I fear your Lordship *with your ship* will have it *hollow*; but before I go back to Crabbe, to have fair play, I would take another picture from Dyer; which, except your Lordship's, is the finest description in the world.

"Now" etc.

"Glide the tall fleet into the widening main

A floating forest: ev'ry sail unfurl'd,

Swells to the wind — etc.

Meantime in pleasing course the pilot steers,
 Steady with eye intent upon the steel,
 Steady before the winds the pilot steers,
 While gaily o'er the waves the mountain prow
 Dance, like a shoal of Dolphins, and begin
 To streak with various paths the hoary deep.
 Yet steady o'er the waves they steer, and now
 The fluctuating world of waters wide
 In boundless magnitude, around them swell,
 O'er whose imaginary brim, nor towns,
 Nor woods, nor mountain tops, nor ought appears,
 But Phoebus orb, refulgent lamp of light
 Millions of leagues aloft."

Hang "Phoebus" and refulgent "lamp"!"

But do you not think the latter part of this description most poetical, with the boundless seas, and the sun's sole orb, as it would be, if accompanied with the gondolas of Venice, or if the ships were entirely omitted, though not so beautifully picturesque?

The ships, however, are still careering in the breeze and sunshine, therefore we will return for a moment to Crabbe, to shew some of the infinitude of this said sea's poetical beauties without ships.

"Turn to the watery world! — but who to thee
 "(A wonder yet unview'd) shall point the sea!
 "*Various and vast, sublime in all its forms,*
 "When lulled by zephyrs, or when rous'd by storm
 "Its colours changing, when from clouds and sun
 "*Shades after shades upon the surface run;*
 "Embrown'd and horrid now, and now serene,
 "In limpid blue, and evanescent green;
 "And oft the foggy banks on ocean lie,
 "Lift the far sail, and cheat the experienced eye.
 "Then the broad bosom of the ocean keeps
 "An equal motion, swelling as it sleeps;
 "Then slowly sinking, curling to the strand,
 "Faint, lazy waves o'ercreep the ridgy sand,
 "Or tap the tarry boat with gentle blow,
 "And back return in silence, smooth and slow.
 "Ships in the calm seem anchor'd, for they glide
 "On the still sea, urg'd solely by the tide:
 "Art thou not present, this calm scene before,

"Where all beside is pebbly length of shore,
 "And far as eye can reach, it can discern no more.

This, to be sure, is not entirely an ocean view, without boats or ships; but how exquisitely, how beautifully, is everything touched! Can you make Paddington Canal as beautiful or sublime?

Now then for a vessel on the stocks.

"Near these a crew amphibious in the docks
 "Rear, for the sea, those castles on the stocks:
 "See! the long keel, which soon the waves must hide
 "See! the strong ribs which form the roomy side,
 "Bolts yielding slowly to the sturdiest stroke,
 "And planks which curve and crackle in the smoke;
 "Around the whole rise cloudy wreaths, and far
 "Bear the warm pungence of o'er boiling tar".

Paint your ship on the stocks how you will, which of these pictures is most sublime or beautiful.

In fact, there is not a sight so awful, so sublime, or so terrible, as the ocean. And, therefore, in its infinite shades and appearances, it exhibits in all, indeed.

"Much of the power and majesty of God."

It is by itself more poetical, far more poetical than a ship with it or without it, — which is my proposition.

And now, my Lord, one word or two about the wind." "The thousands that came to see the ship launched, the sails streaming in the wind, might have heard the wind through the chinks of a pigsty!" Hudibras observes,

"As pigs are said to see the winds".

Did this thought occur, when your Lordship associated the "wind" and the "pigsty" so ingeniously and sublimely? True; the thousands who were attracted to see "the launch" might have heard the "winds through a pigsty"; and they certainly did not go to hear the wind, or to see the sea, which, as you justly observe, "thousands pass "without looking on it at all". Is it less sublime for that? Of all the thousands who saw the beautiful sight of this ship-launch, who among them saw it with the eye, and heart, and feelings of Mr. Campbell! He has painted it, and in painting it, shewn the eye and heart of a poet; but the thousands who went to see the sight, would probably have gone to see Katterfelts perform some of his wonders,

"Wond'ring for his bread",

as readily as to the launch of this ship, so far as poetical interest excited them. But whether they came or stayed at home, whether the ship was launched or not, the sun was not less sublime, though *beauty* was added to the waves.

As to the *winds*, independent of their effect on the sails of a ship, they are poetical or not, as their sound is associated in the poet's fancy. When poor Tom sings,

"Hark! through the hawthorn blows the cold wind";

Let us try the effect of a different association, according to your Lordships ideas, and for the hawthorn add an image from "artificial" life.

"Hark! through the "pigsty" blows the cold wind."

Is the wind equally poetical? In fact, my proposition is proved, if I may say so, to the right and the left; and before some little "logic", your "pigsty", your "garret window", your "footman's livery", your brass warming-pan", are all blown to the winds.

Much as I admire, my Lord, your talents, I think you must have produced such arguments without reflection; if you meant me, in any part of that quotation, wherein you pleasantly apply the words,

"Quoth he, there was a ship;

"Now let me go, thou grey-hair'd loon,

"Or my staff shall make thee skip:"

I answer, though my "hairs, alas! are grey," your staff has not made me skip an inch. What, if I should almost begin to think, I might make even him who swam over the Hellespont "skip"!

But I fear, if I may be thought to have the least advantage, it is because your Lordship has not looked at the question on *all sides*; or remembered the plain words of my proposition; otherwise you would not have amused your admirers at my expense with such a hodge-podge of suns, winds, seas, Wapping, London Docks, Paddington Canals, pigsties, garret-windows, horse-ponds, slop-basins and other vessels, "footmen's livery and brass "warming-pans".

But it is time to leave the coast of England, fruitful in such homely images, and accompany your Lordship to the Coast of Attica — Temple of Theseus, etc.

"The beautiful but barren Hymettus, the whole coast of Attica, her "hills, and mountains, Pentelicus, Anchesmus, Philopappus, etc. are in "themselves poetical, and would be so, if the name of Athens, of Athenians, and her very ruins, were swept from the earth". — Lord Byron. "But am I to be told (you proceed) that the "Nature" of Attica would be *more* poetical without the art of the Acropolis? of the Temple of Theseus? of the still all great and glorious monuments of exquisitely artificial skill? Ask the traveller which strikes him most as poetical, the Parthenon, or the hill on which it stands? The columns of Lake Colonna, or the Lake itself; the rocks at the foot of it, or the recollection that Falconer's ship was bulged upon them? There are a thousand rocks and capes more picturesque than those of the Acropolis and Cape Sunium in themselves; what are they to a thousand scenes in the wilder parts of Greece, of Asia

Minor, Switzerland, or even Cintra in Portugal, or to many scenes of Italy, and the Sierras of Spain?

"But it is the art, the columns, the temples, the *wrecked vessel*, which give them their antique and their modern poetry, and not the spots themselves; without them, the *spots of earth* would be unnoticed and unknown; buried, like Babylon and Nineveh, in indistinct confusion, without poetry, as without existence; but to whatever spot of earth these ruins were transported, if they were capable of transportation, like the obelisk, and the Sphinx, and the Memnon's Head, there they would still exist in the perfection of their beauty and in the pride of their poetry."

I here set before the reader the whole of this passage, because it is itself so beautiful. It is worthy Lord Byron, and is as forcible as it is eloquent, and picturesque as it is argumentative. I need not enter into an analysis to shew that I understand it, for I understand it in its full force; and though I have not seen these places but in Lord Byron's interesting pictures, and even in this splendid assemblage I hope I am not so insensible (such a "Natural"), as not to feel how poetical and affecting are those scattered colums, those temples, in those spots, where, *nescio quomodo movemur etc.*; I can at least say, though I have not seen them, *animum pictura pascit inani*. I might add, *non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora*; and what I feel cannot better be described than in the vivid painting of kindred scenes by a poet whom I have quoted.

"Behold the pride of pomp,
 "The throne of nations fall'n; obscured in dust,
 "E'en yet majestic: the solemn scene
 "Elates the soul, while now the rising sun
 "Flames on the ruins, in the purer air,
 "Tow'ring aloft, upon the glitt'ring plain,
 "Like broken rocks, a vast circumference,
 "Rent palaces, crush'd columns, rifled moles,
 "Fanes roll'd on fanes, and tombs on buried tombs,
 "Deep lies in dust the Theban Obelisk
 "Immense along the waste; *minuter art*,
 "Gleconian forms, or Phidian, subtly fair,
 "O'erwhelming; as the immense Leviathan,
 "Outstretch'd, unwieldy, his island length uprears
 "Above the foamy flood

"Grey mould'ring temples swell, and wide o'ercast
 "The solitary landscape, hills, and woods,
 "And boundless wilds etc.

Dyer's Ruins of Rome.

With such feelings and affected by such images so distinctly and beautifully set before us, where nature and art contend in what is most striking

and affecting in the imagery of either, I read your animated description.

I concede, instantler, that the "Nature" of Attica would not be *more poetical* without the "art" of the Acropolis, or the Temple of Theseus, or the still great and glorious Monuments of her exquisitely artificial genius.

I concede this; but I deny, that, abstractedly, as works of art, these works are as sublime, or, therefore, as poetical, as the sublimest images from nature. Of the rocks on which they stand I know nothing: in sublimity or beauty they may bear as little comparison as a piece of Pentelican marble such as it is in Nature, and Pentelican marble formed into an august temple or statue. No one can deny this: but if you take the highest works of art, with all their poetical associations, and compare them with the spots of earth, where Babylon and Nineveh are buried; the spots as spots, and the ruins as ruins, cannot be compared; but compare the most sublime of the objects of art, either abstractedly, that is, without any poetical associations, or with associations, and I deny the major part of your arguments in toto; or that the sublimest works of art, be they where or what they may, are *more* sublime than the most sublime works of nature. And I again affirm, that what is sublime or beautiful, per se, in the works of nature, *comparatis comparandis*, is *more* sublime or beautiful than any works of art, and also in their associations, one leading the thought to God, and the other to man; and I answer, if you adduce the Temple of Theseus, give me *the Temple of the Universe, not made with hands*, and your temple will be as insignificant as the dust of the marble that composes it.

But, without going so far at present, I will ask your Lordship (and no one is a better judge), whom you think the most sublime of all poets, living or dead, — the most sublime, without exception? Whom would Pope call so? One of those mighty spirits, which has given these poetical scenes, with their temples and columns, half their poetical interest. Shall I say Homer? will you admit this? Then I ask, if so, how comes it to pass, that the greatest poet the world has produced, wrote before the existence of any arts, at least in such perfection? Of rapidity and greatness of events, variety of character, wonderful invention, command of passions, and affecting incidents, we are not here speaking. And I must beg you, my Lord, to remember this, lest I might be told, that I assert that descriptions of external Nature are those which give the chief sublimity to the poems of Homer.

Further, I say that all the illustrious images you have called up from the august remains of ancient art, are connected with *poetical passions*; and these passions are the emotions of *Nature*, from a thousand affecting connections: and I say, putting passions out of the question, that in description of external Nature, and of the gods themselves, without being indebted to any temples, or statues of them, Homer stands, with the ex-

ception of Milton, the sole and mightiest master of his art (of which external nature makes a great part) in the world. Let the temples of art, and the statues of gods, be as beautiful or sublime as they may, how came Homer, in his descriptions, (not of what is natural, his Jack-Ass and Boar similes), but in the most beautiful and sublime objects in Nature, — the θινὰ πολυφλοεβοιο δαλασσης — the beautiful piece by moonlight, — the sublimity of Jupiter or Neptune, — to be the most poetical painter in the world? especially of the god whose statue has given immortality to the name of Phidias? I need not inform your Lordship, that the Jupiter of Homer was the original of the Jupiter of Phidias.

Did Homer, then, exceed every poet in every part of his art? "I think so". Then, if it was before the appearance of such images of art, as your Lordship has so described, "images taken from what is sublime or beautiful in nature must have been *more poetical*, *per se*, than any images derived from art. To proceed: —

What are all the gods of Homer¹, in the description of whom he has so wonderfully excelled, from the Supreme city to the Lord of the Ocean, and to the interior deities of the sea or the skies? What are these but personifications of some of the elements of nature? But we may have more to say of this hereafter. To follow the argument.

Secondly, I would observe" of your richest assemblage of works of art", as *more poetical* than the *spots* where they are, this may be true. But let us leave these "spots" as they are called. Let us leave Greece or even the wild Sierras of Spain, and pass to America. Mark the vast Mississippi or Missouri, pouring their oceanlike waters, from interior sources, through regions "dark with shades of eternal forests!" Hear the astounding fall and torrent roar of the stupendous Niagara! Call up your Phidias, let him form a god there! Call up him who placed Memnon's Head in the desert, and left his name unknown for ever! Call up the builders of those temples and columns, the description of which gives your pictures such interest; will their works add to the magnificence of Nature, or make it more poetical, where the character of the scenery is already on the highest scale of magnificence? "*Manifestations of mind!*" What are the manifestations of the human mind in St. Peter's, the Coliseum, the Pantheon, in the Venus, to the manifestations of the Power and the Majesty of the godhead in all his works?

3dly. The ruins, you say, are as *poetical* in Piccadilly, as they are in the Parthenon. "Its rocks are *less so* without them." Of that I have no doubt; but the rock is not the sublimest of rocks, though the ruins are the sublimest remains of the works of art; and this is scarcely, as I have said, a fair way of stating the comparison: add, that the ruins themselves are more poetical

¹ The arms etc., will be considered, when we speak of the spear of Achilles.

from associations than from their intrinsic sublimity; they indeed stand "alone in the world", as Rogers, speaking of the Torso, has finely said. Besides, are not these ruins, independent of their being the highest specimens of human art, connected with a thousand associations, and all connected with the feelings of Nature. I must have the most sublime and beautiful of objects to meet them in the visible creation; and if these will not do, (but I think the sun and the seas quite sufficient), I might rise, as I have remarked,

"From nature, up to nature's God"! to the far more sublime, and therefore *more poetical*, ideas of Almighty Power, and the immensity of his Works, who "waketh upon the wings of the wind".

"These are Thy glorious works, Parent of Good,

"Almighty, thine this universal frame,

"Thus wond'rous fair; Thyself how wondrous then;

"Unspeaking, who sitst above these heav'ns.

"To us invisible, or dimly seen

"In these thy lowest works; yet these declare

"Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine".

(MILTON).

VENICE, ETC.

I have followed you with delight, my Lord, over the course you have taken since we left the pigsties; but I have to offer some reflections that prevent my coming to your conclusions.

We are now at the gay and glittering Venice. "And the Child stood upon the Bridge of Sighs"; Does its poetical beauty depend upon the sea and canals? — Answer. Take the sea away, let it be of what colour it may, and even Venice would possibly be less poetical. But why canals? These are *dug* by labour. Take away the sea, and will not Venice, in its aspect, be *less* poetical? „Is it the canal which makes it poetical? Certainly not. For I can conceive nothing in the visible world, notwithstanding, its water, so unpoetical as an artificial canal, to add to its interest, creeping, in a straight line, between a row of houses, with a palace on one side, and a prison on the other. The canal, or the Bridge of sighs! Oh! the Bridge of Sighs against all the world. The very name is poetical, and that of canal is quite the contrary. A bridge alone is beautiful and picturesque, and so far poetical; but the clearness of the water, the moving objects, the verdure, or trees, or, if you please, the *boats* near it, perhaps a solitary fisherman, make it more poetical.

I never saw Venice but in a "picture", though I assure you I have seen the sea. A bridge in a city is not so *poetical*, half so poetical, as a bridge out of a city, or near the suburbs; how much more Westminster Bridge, for this reason than London Bridge.

But the "Canal Grande" gives me only the idea of that *least* poetical of American rivers, called by the romantic name of the "Big Muddy".

At Venice, your Lordship is apparently at home, and I have never seen that singular and beautiful city, except as it appears in the paintings of Canaletti. There, I think, nothing ever appeared so unpicturesque and unpoetical. How little do these paintings resemble in beauty the works of Claude, where the admixture of buildings, trees, cattle, etc. is so poetical! It must also be remembered, in the peculiar situation of this unique city, every thing appears on the side of art, and scarce anything on the side of nature; one is exalted, and the other depressed. The sea, instead of rolling and rocking in splendour, becomes a great ditch, divided into other ditches, and the eye is, *per force*, carried away from the insipidities of nature *in this spot* to the decorations of art; and if art ever obtained a transient triumph over *nature*, on the side of the sea, it must have been in this corner of the Adriatic.

If I had seen it, I might paint its gondolas, sparkling in the sun, as they pass and repass each other; the oar, dipped in unison to the distant song, that rose over the waves; the sea, kissing, as in homage, the feet of his mistress, and putting of, as in humility all his richest and proudest attire of beauty.

But I could not paint it as Lord Byron has done; and something ought to be allowed to his glowing and partial pencil.

Having requested the reader to bear in mind these material observations, I confess, if Lord Byron's picture be faithful, as far as we might judge from this *particular spot*, and under these particular circumstances, art might have a transient triumph. Lord Byron, however, must be heard. "There can be nothing more poetical in its aspect than the city of Venice; does this depend upon the sea, or the canals?"

"The dirt and sea-weed whence proud Venice rose?"

Is it the canal which runs between the palace and the prison, or the "Bridge of Sighs", which connects them, that render it poetical? Is it the 'Canal Grande', or the Rialto which arches it, the churches which tower over it, the palaces which line, and the gondolas which glide over the waters, that render this city more poetical than Rome itself? Mr. Bowles will say, perhaps, that the Rialto is but marble, the palaces and churches only stone, and the gondolas a "coarse" black cloth, thrown over some planks of carved wood, with a shining bit of fantastically formed iron at the prow, "*without*" the water. And I tell him, that without these the water would be nothing but a clay-coloured ditch; and whoever says the contrary, deserves to be at the bottom of that, where Pope's heroes are embraced by the mud Nymphs. There would be nothing to make the canal of Venice more poetical than that of Paddington, were it not for the artificial adjuncts above-mentioned; although it is a perfectly natural

canal, formed by the sea, and the innumerable islands which constitute the site of this extraordinary city."

But if this be so in one particular spot and under peculiar circumstances of depression on one side, and exaltation, and a colouring, perhaps, somewhat partial, on the other, the general principle is not affected, that "What is sublime or beautiful in works of nature, is more *poetical* than any works of art!" It might not be so in a particular angle of Europe, in that particular spot, compared with those particular features; but the general principle will not be affected; and I have doubts whether Venice, brilliant as she is, might not look small by the side of the blue and billowy Pacific. I therefore hold it not certain, that Lord Byron has gained a triumph for the cause he espouses, even at this his favourite and unique city, but I contend, if it be so *there*, the general principle is not altered. The embrace of the Mud Nymphs, therefore, for the present, I think I may decline, with your Lordship's permission; and I was almost about to add, concerning this embrace, "*Detur Digniori*".

CITY OF ROME, THE CLOACA, etc.

But from the gay and glittering Queen of the Adriatic, where do your Lordship's excentric wanderings take us now?

To Rome, and the Cloaca at Rome! The city of Rome, with its scattered remains of ancient grandeur,

"Fall'n columns, broken arches, spread",

"Spirit adhuc Imperiosa minas."

But, if cities are considered *poetically*, it must be for their picturesque, and so far "poetical" beauty, like Venice and Constantinople. Seen at a distance, when their appearance harmonizes with the sky, they are most interesting and poetical. The art of the building is lost sight of; and a thousand circumstances of light and shade, glittering towers or cupolas, have an effect of making us entirely overlook the work of art, whilst their most picturesque features blend with the distance into the beauties of nature. But the distinction ought always to be kept in mind; of what is most sublime or beautiful in nature being compared with what is sublime in art; and you, my Lord, without regard to this obvious distinction, take your city, and without discrimination of what is most picturesque or poetical even in a city, demand, "what are the seven hills without the city"? As you make no discrimination, I will; a distant city is much more poetical than one close in sight; the intermixture of water or trees, as in Claude's landscapes, takes off and subdues the glare of nearer art. The different points of elevation that catch the light; smoke here and there perhaps ascending slowly into the cloudless sky; these, and sundry other accidental adjuncts, make a distant city harmonize, as I have said, with

the colours and beauties of Nature in the surrounding scenery; place your city so near as to lose the effect of all these circumstances, your city will not be "so picturesque" to the eye, or so poetical to the imagination.

It is on this account, the line I quoted in the Letter to Campbell has so poetical an effect,

"Fumum, et opes, strepitumque Romae".

What an idea does the "smoke and the noise", give of the magnitude and multitude of a vast metropolis; but if the view had been *more distinct*, had all the buildings, as buildings, been brought nearer, the poetry of the city would be lost at once.

The very sounds of a great city, in like manner, become poetical, when blended into an indistinct murmur,

„And the busy hum of men". Milton.

„For cities humming with a restless noise."

Confusae sonus urbis et illaetabile murmur. (Virgil).

If you come nearer you may hear

The Stir

„Of the great Babel, and the noise she makes,

„Through all her gates."

If you go nearer yet, you may enter with Crabbe into the alleys or lanes; the picture may be drawn with a faithful hand, and every thing set before us as it is; but the Beauty or Sublimity in poetry is lost, and you of necessity approach to what is doubtless no less difficult to *execute*, the confines of the familiar. And so much in general of cities as poetical objects.

But Lord Byron brings us from Venice, not only to the magnificent ruins, but the very Cloaca of Rome.

Even here I shall follow you. Who will think this work of labour as poetical as Richmond Hill, "I know not:" that it may be made poetical, we have the authority of Dyer.

"Such the sewers large,

"Whether the great Tarquinean genius dooms

"Each wave impure; and proud with *added rains*,

"*Hark!* how the Mighty *billows* lash their vaults,

"And thunder; how they heave their rocks in vain!

"Though now incessant time has rolled around,

"A thousand winters o'er the changeful world,

"And yet a thousand since, the indignant floods

"Roar loud, in their firm bounds, and dash and swell

"In vain".

I need not point out where the *poetry* lies; and the reader will observe, there is as little about *Art*, even in this description, as there was in Campbell's ship.

APOLLO, GLADIATOR, HERCULES, ETC.

Which way shall we now turn; for lo! not the hog's tail in a high wind, but all your gods and goddesses, Apollo, Hercules, etc. brought against me and poor Nature!

What an assemblage! We almost shrink at the entrance. The Coliseum, the Pantheon, the Apollo, the Laocoon, the Venus de Medicis, the Hercules, the Gladiator, (I shall omit Moses), and all the higher works of Canova, (why *higher works*, as Hercules' club, if it were equal in execution. do I understand your Lordship, would be as fine a piece of art as Hercules); but these great works of Man are as poetical as Mount Etna, and still more so as "direct manifestations of Mind" etc. I do not think so; but whether they are or are not as *poetical* as Mount Etna, etc. I can bring "*Manifestations of mind*" against them, manifestations of the Almighty Mind, as I have before said.

Why, if Jupiter himself was in your Pantheon, he would fall instantly before the thunder and lightning of the Jupiter in Virgil,

"Ipse pater, media nimborum in rocte, corusca

"Fulmina molitur dextra:" etc.

Why is this Jupiter, as poetry, superior to any marble Jupiter in the world? because no marble can imitate that which forms the most sublime and poetical part of the picture.

"Media nimborum in nocte".

As we are playing at "Bowls", my Lord, I think I can overset your marble gods; for if I bowl down one, all the rest, upon the same principle, will fall about us, like ninepins. I will call in no *supernatural* assistance "Nec deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus".

I will take the dying Gladiator, though it seems rather ungenerous to attack any one after he is *down*. But as this is the most consummate specimen of *Art*, I shall examine your exquisite delineation in poetry of the same statue.

I have done this in my vindication against the Quarterly. I must examine your copy again and more minutely. Here, my Lord, follows your copy, but we must remember we are not speaking of the *Statue* of the Gladiator merely as a work of art, but enquiring which is the *most* poetical, the statue itself, or your copy?

"I see before me the Gladiator lie:

"He leans upon his head his manly brow;

"Consents to death, but conquers agony,

"And his droop'd head sinks gradually low:

"And from his side the last drops, ebbing slow,

"From the sad gash, fall heavy, one by one,

"Like the first drops of a thunder shower; and now

"The arena swims around him. — He is gone,
 "Ere ceas'd the inhuman sound which kill'd the wretch who won
 "He heard it, but he heeded not. His eyes.
 "Were with his heart, and that was for away;
 "He recked not of the life he lost, nor prize;
 "But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
 "There were his young barbarians all at play.
 "There was their Dacian mother. He, their sire
 "Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday!
 "All this rush'd with his blood. Shall he expire,
 "And unaveng'd? Arise, ye Goths, and glut your ire!"

Let us examine these lines, by the statue before us.

I look at the marble; I see you have faithfully exhibited the "Dying Gladiator",

"Leaning upon his hand, his manly brow
 "Consenting to death, but conquering agony!"

A fine idea, which the statue excites in the beholder, and which you have so powerfully expressed! I see also, in your exquisite copy, that the
 "Droop'd head sinks *gradually* low."

Following the idea excited, it may be so represented in poetry. The *sad drops* in the "statue" may seem to fall heavy, one by one, and thus you may describe the act of falling heavy, one by one; but when you add, like the *first drops of a thunderstorm*, you leave the statue as a work, and take the finest part of your *poetical* representation from nature. Thus you make it instantly *more* poetical, or else you need not have brought in this beautiful comparison, which is as remote from art, as *thunder* is from a marble man.

You have made the marble drop blood, with drops that fall *heavy*, and in doing so, you paint from nature, not the statue. But what are the most affecting images? Following nature you make the marble think, as well as drop blood. We instantly feel his increase of agony, as the dying Gladiator in his last hour thinks on his distant home, the banks of the Danube, his children at play; their Dacian mother, and himself, "butchered to make a Roman holiday!" From whence are all these affecting images — from nature? these tender recollections? from nature; and why introduced? to make the statue *more* poetical.

If you say the dumb marble excited all these affecting images in the mind of you, gazing on it with the feelings of a poet, from whence are these pictures and images taken? Who does not answer, from nature?

I shall now leave your Deities, and statues, etc.; for if what is here said be true in *one* example, it must be so in all.

The reader may compare with the statue of Laocoon, the description in Virgil.

The same results will follow, and for the same reason; because "images taken from what is sublime or beautiful in nature" are *more* beautiful and sublime, and therefore *more poetical*, "than any images drawn purely from art." "*Quod erat demonstrandum*;" and, let me add, my Lord, *ex ore tuo*", from your own poetry, opposed to your *own criticisms*.

I think it best to divide the subject, for more clearness, into two parts; and I cannot better end this part than with the battle against your principal deities; — and I remain, my Lord,
etc. etc. etc.

LETTER II

MRS. UNWIN'S NEEDLE

My Lord,

The transition from all the Gods of Art to this humble instrument is rather abrupt; but it is important, although you have included it *in the note*, because we now leave mere works of art for passions; and Mrs. Unwin's needle alone, in my opinion, is as much superior to all your Gods, *poetically* considered, as it is to Cowper's "*sylvan sampler*". The affecting beauty of this image does not depend in the least upon being a needle, *quoad* needle, but upon being *that needle*, which, like the hornbox of Sterne, sets all the interesting circumstances connected with the sacred remembrance of the dead, and the bereaved friend, before us.

Does your Lordship think a spoon, *per se*, poetical? Probably not. Yet when the companions of the brave and unfortunate Cook, so long separated from their country, and in the wildest regions, thousands of leagues from their native land, accidentally saw a spoon, with the name of London on it; their distant country, and their tenderest connections, from whom they had been separated so long, and whom they might never see again, were more strongly recalled to their recollection; and this spoon, like Mrs. Unwin's needle, thus becomes *poetical*, not because it is a spoon, but because, under the peculiar circumstances with which it is presented to the imagination, it wakes the tenderest and most affectionate feelings of our Nature.

But we had better be a little more particular concerning this one circumstance. Mrs. Unwin's *Needle* is, indeed, submitted to my judgment, with a kind of especial emphasis. "I submit to Mr. Bowles's own judgment a passage from another poem of Cowper's, to be compared with the same writer's "*sylvan sampler*". I will let the "*sylvan sampler*" alone at present; it shall be all "*twaddle*"; but the comparison is not fair. You take pure description, and compare it with poetry that affects the heart and passions. I say a tree, *any tree*, is, *per se*, *quoad tree*, more poetical than any needle, *quoad* needle, or *quoad* needle and "*stockings*", which is your Lordship's association. "I submit to Mr. Bowles's own judgment!" A subject so respectfully submitted requires deliberation; and after deliberation, "I submit" the following observations to Lord Byron's *own* judgment! But first referring me to the stanza, he asks, if these *three* lines are not worth all the "*boasted*

twaddling" about trees, so triumphantly re-quoted. I answer, Yes, yes yes: worth *ten thousand* trees, merely as trees, visible trees, connected with no passions of the heart. But, after shewing that you feel the affecting beauty of the *needles* as much as I do, you add, "a homely collection of images and ideas, associated with the *darning of stockings*, the *hemming of shirts*, and *mending of breeches*; and will any one deny they are eminently poetical, and beautiful, and pathetic, as addressed by Cowper to his nurse?"

No, my Lord: no one will deny, and I *the last*, I hope, that they are eminently poetical and beautiful. But what I marvel at is this, that this image should be so touching and affecting to your Lordship, with your associations, *darning of stockings! hemming of shirts! and mending of breeches!* Why, I could not extract the passage without laughing to myself, though I never read the stanzas of poor Cowper without tears in my eyes. I do marvel, that with these associations in your Lordship's mind of *shirt, stockings and breeches!* the image should seem affecting to your Lordship at all. In my mind, it is poetically associated neither with one, nor all, nor any, of these auxiliaries that art has brought in *versus nature*: the thought of one or the other never entered into my head. The needles were associated in my ideas with the loss of a beloved companion, never to be seen more upon earth, and Cowper's solitary and desolate heart, when he beheld the humblest relic of her domestic cares.

These thoughts, my Lord, give the needles interest; and affecting as these lines have ever been, and will be, to all lovers of poetry and *Nature*, I do not think it worth while to take notice of Sheridan's pleasant story of the poulterer.

Let us see the effect of your Lordship's interesting and affecting associations with Mrs. Unwin's needles. Cowper's lines are,

"Thy needles, once a shining store,
 "For my sake restless, heretofore,
 "Now rust disused, and shine no more, my Mary."

Suppose it had so happened that Cowper had died the first, and that Mrs. Unwin, being as good a poet, had introduced, in verses on her departed friend, some of the pathetic images, whose associations have such an effect upon your Lordship's sensibility, it would run, perhaps, in this manner:

"Thy "stockings", oh, departed friend!
 Thy "shirt", that thou so oft didst rend
 "Thy "breeches" I no more shall mend,
 My Cowper!

The "true critic" will not fail to remark how much pathos and poetry

is added to the "shirt" as making it at the same time more characteristic of a *poetical* wearer, by being "rent".

To return. After your Lordship's triumphant sally against nature, armed with Mrs. Unwin's needle, in one hand, and Cowper's "stockings", and "breeches" in the other, you seem scarce able to restrain your expressions of triumph, for thus, my Lord, flows the tenor of your exulting prose: "One more *poetical* instance of the Power of Art, and even its superiority, over Nature, in *poetry*, and I *have* done."

And now behold.

THE BUST OF ANTINOUS

"The bust of Antinous", in your Lordship's animated language, is *not* natural, but *supernatural*, or rather *super-artificial*!" As a work of Art of *statuary*, this head I conceive to be, if I may judge from rude copies, most perfect. But poetry and statuary are two things, as poetry and painting, are; and therefore, though nothing in the whole world of art may exceed this head in marble, I would only beg your Lordship to endeavour to describe it in poetry. We are speaking of poetry, and not of statuary as an art; and with such enthusiasm, if you cannot describe it, I know no one who can. When you have put it into verse, I will examine it, and see how far your Lordship will, *per force*, be obliged to have recourse to *her*, by whose aid your poetry shines, as much as your criticism ungratefully decries her. You say, "the poetry in this bust is in no respect derived from nature! It must be difficult to say what the poetry of the bust is derived from, for it is *not natural*, but *supernatural*, or rather *super-artificial*!" Byron.

As I am not one of the initiated in these mysteries, but only pretend to be a man of common sense, this is all to me, I confess, as mystic as "Muggletonian dreams, or rather, might I venture to say, like "super-artificial twaddle"!"

"Is there anything in nature like this bust, except the Venus?" That is, is there anything in *nature* like this bust, except the Venus, which is *not* in nature? Do I understand it? Let the reader try.

"Is there anything in nature like this marble, except the Venus? Can "there be more poetry gathered into existence than in that wonderful "creation of perfect beauty; but the poetry of this bust is in no degree "derived from nature. The execution is not natural, it is *super-natural*, "and *super-artificial*." I know that every thing in art must be ideal nature, possible nature, beyond common, existing, every-day nature. But the great prototype of the most beautiful "*supernatural*", "*super-artificial*" art, must be *n a t u r e*! The most perfect bust must have eyes, lips, forehead, hair, nose etc., etc.

"Yes, but nature never produced anything so perfect as this bust, in this respect!"

It is of no great consequence, in my opinion, whether this be literally true or not. But your Lordship is a little hard *upon nature*. You are yet a young man, and in the course of your travels have seen a lady of rank, and I, though not such an *elegans formarum spectator* as your Lordship, who have also had the pleasure of being once in her company, admit all you say. Yes, you, my Lord, in a small space of life, and compared with the time that has passed since man was first created, but as a wink, you have seen, a British Lady and an Albanian girl, nearly, if not quite, as perfect, with respect to form, features, countenance etc. as the Venus. You must have been most singularly fortunate; yet, in your *circumscription of the powers of nature*, you tell us "nature never produced a living face like this, or the bust of Antinous." How do you know? But I do not care whether nature has or has not. Poetry has; and I will place Milton's Adam and Eve, as perfect in form, in *supernatural*, or in *superartificial beauty*, as the bust of Antinous, or the statue of Venus!

When I reflect on the ardour of your language, granting this bust to be that of woman, and made complete, as a whole *supernatural, super-artificial female*, there might almost be a fear that your Lordship's love would resemble at last that of Pigmalion; but there would be no danger, for the moment your *super-natural, super-artificial* beauty was *alive*, your *super-artificial* transport would be over! The whole of what you say on this point appears so strange to a man of plain understanding, that I think I must have misconceived your meaning. If I have done so, I shall be sorry; if I do understand it, I have no hesitation to use your own words, "away with such "cant!" such "*supernatural*" and *super-artificial* "twaddle!" I here put aside this bust, as I have already made an attack upon your full assemblage of marble gods, the mighty machinery of your criticism.

I have said that statuary and poetry are two things. Statuary, as an *art*, is indebted to nature for only one thing, with which, indeed, she performs *her wonders*; turning a rude block into such a creature, *sui generis*, as now adorns the dining-room of Lansdown House, so beautiful so perfectly beautiful, that I, Goth as I may seem to your Lordship, when I have the honour of being admitted as a guest, have sometimes forgot my soup to gaze. Art, then, is indebted to nature for nothing but the block; but for what is the statuary indebted to nature? for *all his ideas*. For though he might have been less fortunate than your Lordship, who have *accidentally* met in your travels so near a resemblance to Venus, as the Albanian girl, yet he could have had no *ideas at all* of beauty, except from nature; for if there had not been a beautiful human figure, and "thinking things", my Lord, like you and me, upon earth, had *other forms*, neither of us could have had the least idea of that beauty, the conception of which is first required in the sculptor. But let the art and artist have done all they can they cannot render their image as perfect as poetry can; for she can give

to the statue life, animation, tears, smiles, language, eyes that shine, etc. and for these ideas poetry is indebted to *Nature*.

The bust of Antinous, which seems even superior to all your other vanquished gods, to Mrs. Unwin's needles themselves, I fear, also, must fall, like "Friar Bacon's Head!"

But as you have joined with this bust the "Poulterer's shop", and Cowper's "sylvan sampler" of trees, by way of saving time, I shall here say a word or two of poetical trees. Your Lordship does not seem to admire "trees". However, let us only remark that even Constantinople would be less poetical without them, and by putting them here together, the city and the trees, I think I shall be able, not only to save time, but to "kill two birds with one stone."

PORT OF CONSTANTINOPLE

I have no doubt from what I have read, the view you speak of is unique in picturesque and poetical beauty. But, my Lord, are there indeed no trees among the buildings? No golden cupolas shining to the morn? Much as your Lordship dislikes "sylvan samplers", are there no beautiful palms, sleeping, as it were, in the sunshine, like a beautiful Albanian girl? No dark cypresses breaking the white buildings? As to the sylvan part of the landscape, I shall ask permission to quote a line of my own.

..... "Sees
"Damascus' golden fans, and minarets and trees."

I put the "trees" into the picture, my Lord, not for the sake of rhyme, which sometimes more sublime poets do; (and your Lordship well knows that rhyme

"The rudder is of verses,
By which, like ships, they steer their courses:"

(Hudibras)

but I assure you I put in these "odious tress", not for the sake of the rhyme, but to break the monotony of buildings, and to make them more poetical; and I doubt how *poetical* even Constantinople would look without them; and to shew this, not being a great traveller, but having seen the sea, not "only in a picture", as your Lordship seems to think, but, in reality, I must take you from Constantinople, and the Hellespont, to that part of the sea with which I am most familiar, Southampton Water. The banks are hung almost entirely with wood, as far as the eye can reach.

"And forests sweep the margin of the main". Now suppose the whole line was houses, would it be so poetical? I think not! "And *Chimnies* sweep the margin of the main."

If you say, the buildings, interspersed, add to the poetical effect of the trees, as well as the trees to them, I answer, "Doubtless!" But the test is this: Which would be most poetical — a beautiful building without trees, or trees without buildings, on the seaside? The bust, and the trees, have led me a little out of my way, for I intended to have connected "the Needle" with

HOMER'S SPEAR, WARRIORS, ARMS, HELMETS, BOWS, ETC.

"The shield of Achilles derives its poetical interest from the subjects described on it." — Bowles.

"And from what does the spear of Achilles derive its interest? and the helmet and the mail worn by Patroclus, and the celestial armour, and the very brazen greaves, of the well-boozed Greeks?" — Byron.

And now, if Mrs. Unwin's needle and *stockings* will not much serve your Lordship, let us see what can be effected on your side as the champion of art *versus naturam*, by the "spear" of Achilles.

But why did you take the spear, my Lord? What can the "spear" do, if the "shield" could do nothing? The helmet, of which you find Campbell has made so poetical an use in *O'Connor's Child*, would have done better; but not to quail under the spear of Achilles, even in the hands of Lord Byron, I ask you first, if the spear be poetical, is it more poetical than the warrior who uses it? The shield in Homer, and the pastoral cup in Theocritus, are described at large. The great poets were obliged to have recourse to images from *Nature* to *sustain* the poetical interest of a work of art. But describe distinctly a spear. It is long, it is short, or, perhaps, *bloody*. Let us take the first arms that occur in Homer, not of Achilles, but of a secondary warrior¹.

Let us remark Diomed, putting on his warlike habiliments. Now observe, for it is a matter of mere observation, how Homer, by images drawn from *Nature*, in connection with ideas of terror or sublimity, makes us forget the work of art, and rouses the attention; these are some of the animating adjuncts that make the picture more poetical.

The first thing that presents itself is the helmet.

"High on his helm Celestial lightnings play!

"His beamy shield emits a living ray;"

"Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies,

"When fresh he rears his radiant orb to sight,

"And bath'd in ocean, shoots a keener light."

Pope's Homer

¹ I have spoken at large on this subject in the last vindication, where I mentioned the images from art introduced in the *Paradise Lost*. Achilles' spear is an ash from Mount Pelion, as Satan's spear was like a Mast hewn in Norwegian forests.

I have extracted these remarks from a few observations, written long before your criticism; there is none of your examples, my Lord, which I have not before attentively considered; and I must think, you have not so attentively considered them as myself.

I hope this will be sufficient to shew, that I do not wish Ulysses to use, as in the *travestie*, his "mutton-fist" instead of his bow. But suppose you had brought against me Hector himself, κορυδαίολος Hector!

Examine the most interesting circumstance in the whole *Iliad*, where the *Helmet* becomes most interesting: Need I mention the parting between Hector and Andromache? Every heart has been smitten with the affecting incidents of the passage, since Homer existed. The child is in the mother's arms; and as Hector, going to battle, is about to kiss it, the child is frightened at the plumes, and turns his head into his mother's bosom: Hector takes his helmet off, and then kisses the child, who, εκλινδὲν ιαχῶν, whilst the mother smiles in her tears; and I ask, which does your Lordship think the *most poetical*, the affectionate father, the tearfully smiling mother, the child that shrinks, or the *Helmet*? I know what you will say in your heart, if you are indeed "magnanimous" enough, whilst you will admit the truth of what I have said.

As I think I have taken your city of Venice, Constantinople, etc. "played at Bowls", not, I hope, without success, among your marble Gods, and even supported my case against you, whether armed with the glittering spear of Achilles, or brandishing Mrs. Unwin's needle, I consider the battle nearly won. I shall dispatch some of the most material of the other arguments as shortly as I can.

Your Lordship brings the sublime image before us, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah."

I object to the dyed garments from Bozrah!! Had they been specified as a work of art, I should; but who thinks of the garments, when nothing is specified, and when the eye and mind are fixed on the terrible and advancing spectacle? As to garments, now your Lordship has taken me to the scriptures, let me ask what is more sublime than this passage; "the battle of every warrior is with confused noise, and with garments rolled in blood!" You have also omitted, in the passage you have quoted, a circumstance which gives an indistinct glory even to the garments. "He that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength."

I do not like to touch this awful and sublime passage, but must only desire your Lordship to consider what would be the effect of a garment from artificial life, a "red coat" for instance.

From the dyed garments, which do not take off from the grandeur of the image the least, because they are not specified, let us pass to the garments of Caesar, and the dagger that destroyed him, for we are now speaking of the works of *Art* in poetry. I do not object, nor ever should

object, nor is there anything in the principles I have laid down which should make me object, to the "dagger" or the "garment". The dagger is connected with ideas of terror, and is, *per se*, in some degree *poetical*; but a *knife* is not; and therefore, though I do not object to the "dagger", I object very much to the "knife", when Lady Macbeth says,

"Pall me in the deepest shroud of night,
"That my keen *knife* see not the wound it makes."

I object as much to "blanket", which renders the sublimest passage in the world ludicrous.

"Nor heaven *peep through the blanket* of the dark!"

This I object to; and I object somewhat, not to the "dagger"¹, or the "garment", which are introduced, but to "peep through", and I object, for the same reason to

"See what a rent the envious Casca made."

But so far from objecting to the garment, when Antony says

"You all do know *this garment*."

I think it *most affecting*; and how much more affecting is it rendered by the magic touch of Shakespeare, when, in continuation, Antony, (how could you, a poet, omit these exquisite lines?) brings to the recollection of Caesar's friends a particular and beautiful circumstance from nature, whilst the orator *affects* their *hearts* by the *distinct* image of the summer evening, and the very tent, connected with ideas of Caesar's glory, and recent victory.

"You all do know this mantle! I remember

"The first time Caesar ever put it on:

"Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,

"The day he overcame the Nervii!"

Any thing more beautiful as poetry, or more effective as oratory, designed to rouse the feelings, cannot be imagined.

Thus you see, my Lord, I can turn Shakespeare against you, as well as Milton against Campbell, and gain strength from your own quotations. Who that feels the circumstances I have mentioned thinks of the *garments* of Caesar merely as a garment? It is the poetical sentiment that fills the mind, and the poetical imagery from *Nature*. But the case had been different, if the garment had been from *artificial* life, or too distinctly brought in sight. I will illustrate this by a trifling circumstance. You recollect the passage,

¹ The poetry of the "dagger" depends entirely upon its associating images. The dagger in Macbeth is sublime; in Hudibras it is ludicrous; because "when it had killed a Cheshire man, 't would toast a Cheshire cheese."

"Life is a walking shadow, etc.
 "Out, out, brief candle."

Shakespeare.

This passage is quoted in an edition of the Tatler, as follows,

"Life is a walking shadow; a poor player,
 "That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
 "And then is heard no more,
 "Out, out, short candle!"

Now every one feels this absurdity; and yet brief is short, and short is brief. Why has it so ludicrous an effect? Because, when the word "brief" is used, the mind is fixed *only upon the sentiment*; when "short" is used, it is fixed *only on the candle*!

If these observations are just, and I believe they will generally be found so, nothing more need be said of daggers, arms, shield, spears, etc.; or the bow of Ulysses.

The human *hand* may be poetical or not, as it is described. But a *fist* doubled up as in the act of committing an assault, complaint of which comes before a country justice, is not poetical; and I am afraid, my Lord, all you have said of "fists", and "fighting", and "gouging", must go for nothing.

"It grieves me much, replied the Clerk again,
 "Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain!"

I cannot put aside the bow of Ulysses without one more remark. I have spoken before of the affecting circumstance of Penelope weeping over the bow of her long-lost husband. Do you think that the effect would have been the same, if she had wept over his *wig*, provided he even wore one?

Mrs. Unwin's "needles" were dangerous, and would have failed in any hands but Cowper's; and him you pronounce "no poet!". This is an *αποτυχία* 'which I could not have expected. He failed in Homer completely; but your assertion can only be met by another. He was a great, a sublime, an affecting, and what is more, a truly ethical and religious poet, my Lord. But he lessened the effect of passages of the utmost sublimity of thought and language, by transitions to the familiar and to the artificial. Who can bear,

"Who loves an hothouse, loves a green-house too",
 because hot-houses and green-houses are not so poetical as "green fields". And when you describe me as having "a heart of gall" for endeavouring to appreciate (not "*depreciate*") Pope, as a poet and a man, consider, my Lord, whether he be quite consistent, who talks of poetry without feeling Cowper's; who talks of ethics, without venerating him; and who severely

judges him as guilty of a crime, the effect of that awful calamity, with which it pleased the Almighty to afflict him!

But to return for a last grapple with

ACHILLES' SPEAR

Achilles' spear is the only part of his armour that is unworthy of him; and this you select, instead of the emblazoned shield, so distinctly marked as a finished piece of art. Homer seemed to have paid so much attention to the other part of his favourite hero's armour that he scarcely says anything of this. But even this, my Lord, I can turn against you, as I did Satan's spear against Campbell. All that is said of this spear is, that it is paternal, and was cut from the mountain Pelion. What signifies where it was cut? you might say! So, when you observe there was no occasion for the "Norwegian pine", when you liked the "ammiral's mast", with which to compare Satan's spear, better, I withdraw from the contest, and leave your Lordship to battle with Homer and Milton as to the propriety of any poetical addition to their similies. If the "grey-haired loon" did not skip from the staff, he remains equally sturdy against the "spear of Achilles".

What I have said of the armour of Diomed and others in Homer, may be said of that of Achilles; and without expecting a coadjutor in Pope, I looked at the note on the passage, and found these words: "There is a wonderful pomp in the description of Achilles arming himself, etc. etc. He is at first *likened to the moonlight*, then to the *flames of a beacon*, then to a *comet*, and lastly to the *sun* himself!"

Your Lordship thinks the execution of a poem all!¹ This I deny; and affirm, that, *comparatis comparandis*, if an epic poem evince as consummate *execution* as a smaller poem, he who composes an epic poem, with this consummate execution, will be a greater poet, in every sense of the word, than he who evinces the utmost and most consummate skill on an inferior and less poetical subject. And I need not hesitate to affirm this, for it is the opinion of all critics, from Aristotle to Dr. Johnson. As to Petrarch being equal, or reckoned, in Italy, superior, to Dante, it may be the consequence of some peculiar attachment of the Italians to the name of Petrarch; but of this they could never persuade me, though fulminated *ex cathedra* by all the Popes that Italy ever produced. And I may safely appeal to the universal opinion, not only of professed critics, but of all men of general common intelligence.

One word more will end all I have to say at present on another subject, — the moral character of Pope. If it was not from want of "money" etc. that I wrote his life, and published an edition of his works, there is another

¹ What! is the conception of such a name as the *Paradise Lost* nothing?

circumstance that might have prevailed with me in giving my opinions, namely, a conscientious conviction of the truth of what I advanced; and what is biography, if failings are not to be mentioned? As to his "ethics" the poet, I admit, profanes the dignity of his high art, who does not apply the gifts he possesses to the furtherance of truth and virtue. But I contend, that one epistle of Eloisa will counteract ten thousand of Pope's ethical epistles; and I wish your Lordship to look at that glorious passage in Milton's prose works, where he speaks of meditating some immortal strain, and you will confess, that, so far from thinking he was telling "lies", his object was high and holy praise to that Being to whom he owed the power of praising him.

Whether it was wise to say all I did of Pope, I cannot tell. I spoke as I *sincerely* believed; that it was not *wise* to speak with *candour*! I have found to my cost.

FALCONER'S SHIPWRECK, DESERT, HOUNSLOW HEATH

What has been said, I conceive, will be sufficient to enable the commonest reader to see the weakness or irrelevancy of all your arguments. In looking back, I shall only notice shortly a few I have omitted. You have spoken of the poetical effect of terms of art in Falconer's shipwreck. Nothing can have a greater effect than many, in bringing us as it were into the ship, and enabling us to see every action of the men employed in the hour of horror. Nothing can be more beautiful than the description "of weighing anchor"; the description of the stately Britannia, and her riding on,

"The pride and glory of the Aegean Main".

The other parts of the landscape are purposely kept out of sight, that every eye and every heart may be fixed on this beautiful object, as she streams on the sight, departing for ever.

But when you speak of the poetry of the tackle, bunt-line, clue-lines etc. do you really think these as poetical as the description of the tempestuous scene of darkness and distress itself? Do you think that when the ship is in the hollow of one of those enormous waves; when

"In that horrid vale,

"She hears no more the roaring of the gale;

do you think this awful and novel image is not ten thousand times more poetical than such lines as,

"For he who seeks the tempest to disarm,

"Must never first enbrail a lee yard-arm?"

or,

"Taught aft the sheet, they tally and belay?"

Your cannon itself, my Lord, has smoke and noise, but does no execution.

I have spoken of this in my last pamphlet on the subject of the "devilish artillery" in Milton. Your criticism, on this point, is sensible and judicious; but of your own cannon we cannot say, as one of the leaders did,

"The terms we sent were terms of weight!"

Much as I have said about the poetical effect of ships on their element, and although I have quoted your own striking description before, I cannot resist recalling to the reader's attention the animated picture of this kind from the publication before me:

"The aspect of a storm in the archipelago is as poetical as need be, the sea being particularly short, dashing, and dangerous, and the navigation intricate and broken by the isles and currents. Cape Sigeum, the tumuli of the Troad, Lemnos, Tenedos, all added to the associations of the time. But what seemed the most "poetical" of all at the moment, were the numbers (about two hundred) of Greek and Turkish craft, which were obliged to "cut and run" before the wind, from their unsafe anchorage, some for Tenedos, some for other isles, some for the main, and some it might be for eternity. The sight of these little, scudding vessels, darting over the foam in the twilight, now appearing, and now disappearing between the waves in the cloud of night with their peculiarly white sails, (the Levant sails not being of "coarse canvas", but of white cotton), skimming along as quickly, but less safely, than the sea-mews which hovered over them; their evident distress, their reduction to fluttering specks in the distance, their crowded succession, their littleness, as contending with the giant element, which made our stout forty-four's teak timbers (she was built in India) creak again; their aspect and their motion, all struck me as something far more "poetical" than the mere broad, brawling, shipless sea, and the sullen winds, could possibly have been without them."

This is a beautiful picture indeed; but the extraordinary circumstance is, that if I could have painted it, I could not have brought anything in the world so much in favour of the principles of poetry I advocate, and against yourself.

I will mention a few circumstances,

"The sight of these little, *scudding vessels, darting, over the foam, in the twilight, now appearing and now disappearing between the waves in the cloud of the night, with their peculiarly white sails, skimming along as quickly, but less safely, than the sea-mews which hovered over them; their evident distress, their reduction to fluttering specks in the distance, their crowded succession, their littleness, as contending with the Giant element!!*"

Thank you, my Lord! Any one who casts his eye over the words I have marked, will see how much of Nature, and how little of art, appears in the poetry of this animated description; and I conclude this

observation by turning the most richly coloured passage in your publication, my Lord, against yourself.

Whether the mere *brawling*, *shipless* sea, and the *sullen* winds, (as your Lordship, with the skill of a rhetorician, not as a reasoner, calls them,) could be as poetical without the vessels, I say not; but, when thus seen, and thus set before us, I fearlessly repeat, that to those winds, to that element so gigantic, against which their "littleness" contended, we owe the most picturesque and poetical part of the beauty of this passage.

I have observed, "that your own poetry laughed at your *variable* principles of criticism," and so animated were you in this description, that you must have utterly forgotten, whilst you wrote it, *its tendency*, which is to establish the "*invariable*" principles of nature, confirmed by yourself, on the very element with which you are so familiar. "Take away the pyramids, and what is the desert? Take away Stonehenge from Salisbury Plain, and it is nothing more than Hounslow Heath, or any other uninclosed down." — Byron.

I will tell you, my Lord, why a desert is poetical without a pyramid: because it conveys ideas of immeasurable extent, of profound silence, of solitude. What is Salisbury Plain without Stonehenge? Stonehenge is poetical from its traditions, and uncertain origin. (See Warton's fine sonnet.) But Hounslow Heath conveys to the mind chiefly ideas of "artificial" life, — turnpike roads, stage-coaches in all directions, raree showmen, whose shows "thousands" would look at, who do not look at the sun!! carts and caravans, and butcher boys scampering on horseback with one spur, and my Lord in his coach, with the "poetical Liverymen" behind!

Therefore, Hounslow Heath is not so poetical as "the Desert", connected with the idea of solitude, of extent, of sands moving in the vast wilderness; of Arabs telling their wild stories by moonlight, etc.: — these make "the desert" more poetical than Hounslow Heath, with or without a pyramid.

But we must be more particular, now we are come to

SALISBURY PLAIN

We have been taking a delightful excursion, from Venice to Constantinople, from Athens and the shore of Greece to the deserts and the Pyramids of Egypt, as on Rogero's horse, from the pyramids and deserts of Egypt, having placed me,

"Ut magis, modo Thebis, modo Athenis",

you have brought me back safely to Salisbury Plain, within thirty miles of my own door.

And here it is almost time (for which I am sorry) to part, for the excursion has been pleasant; and if we have not quite agreed on the road, I hope we shall part in as good humour as we met. But before I take my

leave, suffer me to recall to your recollection the first words of your sentence about the pyramids.

The reader has seen, that you have admitted they are not so poetical without the desert and its associations as with them. Now I have quoted my original positions four or five times, placed them before Mr. Campbell, the Quarterly Review, and your Lordship, and I beg, and entreat you again to remember, I never said that works of art were *not poetical* (I must have been an idiot so to have said,) I only said the sublime and beautiful works of nature were, *per se*, *abstractedly*, *more so*! Has the air of Italy, Milan, etc. affected your Lordship's recollection? "Works of Nature are, *per se*, in what is beautiful or sublime, *more poetical* than any works of art."

"Passions are *more* poetical than the manners and habits of artificial life."

If you had read what I distinctly laid down, or, having read the first propositions, remembered them, your book would not have been so pleasant, but I cannot concede that any instance you have advanced, has affected my original positions.

Your gods and goddesses; your statues, busts, temples; your arms, shields and spears, (not forgetting Mrs. Unwin's needle and Cowper's small-clothes) your prospects of cities by sea, Venice, Constantinople, etc.; your pyramids and pigsties; your slopbasins and "other vessels"; your liveryman; the desert, Hounslow Heath (why not Bagshot? it is the most poetical of the two,) Salisbury Plain, the Poulterer, the rabbits, "white, black and grey", vanish at the waving of the wand of truth; and the grotesque assembly becomes.

"Like the baseless shadow of a vision."

However, we are got safe upon Salisbury Plain at last, it is time to make my bow; and I can assure you, my Lord, I look back on many of the beautiful pictures you have painted with unfeigned delight, though still thinking my principles of poetical criticism not a jot the less "invariable", in consequence of my arguments you have brought against them.

There are one or two personal passages in your pamphlet, which it is possible, upon second thoughts, you would have omitted. Whether you would do so or not, I shall pass them over *sub silentio*; and hoping, in the course of this discussion, I may not have said a word to give the least personal offence to your Lordship,

I remain etc. etc.

W. L. BOWLES.

Bremhill, near Calne.

April 14, 1821.

Post scriptum.

I forgot to speak of a ship in a tempest as a poetical object; and this, probably, your Lordship may turn against me. A ship in a tempest undoubtedly is both sublime and terrible; but what makes it so? It is the intense sympathy with the terror and distress, that causes the sublimity: and do you sympathize with the people in the ship, or *the ship*? the men, or *the boards*? then your sympathy is derived from nature. If you knew a ship *had no men* in it, the terror, and those feelings which cause sublimity, would be lost. Let the ship appear in the tempest, and far greater sublimity and terror will, on this account, be given when she appears no longer.

Crabbe and Coleridge have both taken such a moment of terror, which gives an indescribable sublimity; because, an image from nature is called up, which shews you those miserable people in despair and agony one moment; in the next, the waves are only seen, the storm only heard, and the ship gone.

Coleridge's idea is that, at midnight, he beholds a ship tossing, by one flash of lightning; another flash comes, and

"He sees no vessel there."

Whilst we are on the subject, allow me again to advert to that singularly affecting poem, "The Shipwreck". How does Falconer contrive to make the ship itself an object of sympathy? By personifying it, as endowed with sense:

"Now launching headlong down the horrid vale,
"She hears no more the roaring of the gale.

The cause of the want of interest in the scenes and classic places by which the ship is surrounded, arises only from the double anxiety and sympathy with the mariners, and particularly those for whom we are so much interested.

Who at such a moment could bear to have his deep solitude interrupted by being called upon to contemplate even those shores, where

"Godlike Socrates and Plato shone:"

(Shipwreck)

As the scene rises in terror, how fine is the introduction of the Angel of the Wind.

"And lo! tremendous o'er the deep he springs.

"The inflaming sulphur flashing from his wings;

"Hark! his strong voice the dismal silence breaks."

Is not this infinitely more poetical than

"Taught aft the sheet, they tally and belay?"

In some cases, where nautical terms are used, the effect, I admit,

is very striking, in bringing you, as it were, into the midst of this forlorn and agonized crew.

Such is the animated passage,

"Square fore and aft the yards, the master calls:

"You Timoneers her motion still attend,

"For on your steerage all our lives depend:

"So steady! meet her! watch the curving prow,

"And from the gale directly let her go!"

"Starboard again! 'the watchful Pilot cries:

"Starboard!' th'obedient Timoneer replies!"

Who can read this without fancying himself amidst the crew, and almost hearing the conflict of the elements, the words given and repeated,

"Starboard again! ,the watchful Pilot cries

"Starboard! 'th'obedient Timoneer replies!"

But an image from artificial life puts to flight almost all sympathy.

"Fate s p u r s her on!"

A few more critical observations occur on looking over what your Lordship has advanced.

ARCHITECTURE.

You observe that it is the architecture of Westminster Abbey, that makes it poetical: the tower for "making patent shot", accordingly, would be equally poetical, if the architecture was the same. I affirm this is not so. Westminster Abbey is and must be, poetical, from moral associations more than from its architecture. "The object" cannot be seen without these associations, connected with time, and the illustrious dead.

I say, your answer is that of a *painter*, not a poet! The architecture would make "the tower for patent shot" equally picturesque, as an object, for painting sees nothing but the surface, but it would not make it as *poetical*, except in mere description; and I defy your Lordship, and all the poets who ever existed, to make "the patent shot tower" poetical, let the architecture be what it will, unless they keep all its uses and name out of sight. In using the word "objects", of course I imply "poetical" objects, which include not only the visible form, but the associations. Nay, Sir Christopher Wren's additions to Westminster Abbey are not so poetical as the Abbey itself, though their "architecture" were as appropriate as it is harmonious. I cannot shew the absurdity of a *poetical* tower for "patent shot", so well as by a plain instance — that of the "Old Minster" and the "Glass-houses" at Bristol! If a glass-house had the same architecture, to a painter it would appear the same: but try the effect in poetry. Chatterton, speaking of the spirit of Alla, says:

. "Whether
 "Or fiery round the Minster glare;"

Try the effect of the other building, supposing its *architecture* the same,
 "Or fiery round the "Glass-house" glare!"
 the whole passage becomes ludicrous.

THE WALL OF MALAMOCCHO, EUXINE, AND ARGO.

When I speak of the sea, I do not speak of the Adriatic, or any part of it in particular. You take particular *spots*, and ask, whether, in that spot, the "*master*" that curbs the sea, be not more poetical than the sea?

"*Curb the Adriatic!*" What must this strip of sea be to bear being "so curbed"? Its poetical *sublimity* must be entirely subdued, by Venice in one corner, and "*a wall*" in the other! Bring your "*walls*", my Lord, to "*curb*" the Pacific! and you would do something! But the mighty Cordelleiras, of *Nature*, only can do that.

The "*Argo*" entering into the Euxine must have been, indeed, a most poetical object; and I can readily feel with the poet, standing on the spot from whence the spectacle might have been first seen, repeating the lines from the Greek tragedian.

No ship had been there before! What reflections, fears, and awe, would that thought alone create! But I ask, is the interest, even here, derived from the ship as a *work of art*? It is in part derived, no doubt, from the idea of the courage, enterprise, and mastery of man over this great element, in part from the beauty added to the scene; but the novelty, the awe, and other complex ideas, excite the highest poetical enthusiasm, which I should partake with your Lordship, but should not think my principles of the sublime of Nature in the least affected by this instance. For, *abstractedly*, the Euxine is a *more sublime* object than the Argo, and if you admit associations, they must be derived from feelings of *Nature*.

I find I have done your Lordship injustice in supposing the canal of Venice "*artificial*"; but the name alone is quite sufficient to destroy its poetical interest.

I think I have now examined almost all of your arguments. The "tall" ship becomes "diminished to a buoy"; — the marble temples sink to dust, or, opposed even to the mountains of America, appear as little as the Pyramids, scarcely seen at the bottom of the engraving called the "scale of mountains"; — Mrs. Unwin's needle renders not more service than that of Gammer Gurton, which was found in Hodge's breeches! — Antinous' bust becomes fragile as the brazen head of Friar Bacon; — and Homer's arms, that make such a glittering show, impose only for a moment, like the coruscations of a fire-work, which seems to add, as

it ascends, a thousand stars and glories to the night, and falls down a "bit of burnt stick."

So, my Lord, the airy style, the pleasant stories, the delightful pictures, the brilliant imagery, of your publication, are as beautiful as they are baseless because, on the least touch of argumentative examination, they are reduced to nothing,

"Cum ventum *ad verum* est sensus, natura repugnat."

In fully, and I hope satisfactorily, developing my ideas on the subject of this controversy, I have thought it necessary to go into more minute detail, to prevent the possibility of future misrepresentation; having done this, and being convinced that misrepresentation must now be from design, I hope to drop for ever the controversial pen.

The "order" of classing the highest kind of poetry is not mine, and therefore, not *arbitrary*; "the order" is that admitted by all who ever thought or wrote on the subject. Lord Byron's code is *arbitrary*, and not mine. As to the poet being ranked according to his "*execution, and not the branch, of his art*," "I have never considered the *branch* of the art as constituting a poet independent of the *execution*."

I estimate a poet's character from both.

Though I hope to lay down, after what I have now said, my controversial pen, I do not give up the idea of publishing a volume on poetical criticism, illustrative of these remarks. If a single expression occur in the preceding pages, contrary to the fairest mode of argument, it has not been intentional.

The public will decide between us; but one concluding observation must be made. Your Lordship has entertained us with a pleasant story of the "*doctor's*" hat, alluding to my "*sensitiveness*" to criticism; therefore I devote what remains to the chapter of

the DOCTOR'S HAT ¹.

"Mr. Bowles's extreme sensibility reminds me of a circumstance "which occurred on board of a frigate in which I was a passenger. The "surgeon wore a wig. Upon this ornament he was extremely tenacious. One day a young lieutenant, in the course of a facetious discussion, said, 'Suppose now, doctor, I should take off your hat.' 'Sir', replied the doctor, 'I shall talk no longer with you; you grow scurrilous'. — Byron.

Allow me only to say, that for thirty years I never made one reply to any criticism, good, bad, or indifferent; nor should I have done so now, if I had had fair play. But I must hint, that the "*doctor's hat*", in my opinion, fits your Lordship better than it does me; for the instant your early poems

¹ Hippocrates says, Let us be covered. In what chapter? the Chapter on Hats." Molière.

were sent into the world, and encountered the rude breath of the critics, you fell foul, of critics, poets, statesmen, lords, ladies, and, among the number, none received less indulgence than your present correspondent. You have admitted with what good-humour this criticism on my temper and talents was met, whether it was more than I deserved or not.

But your Lordship was "lazy"; and therefore the task of bestowing the "heaviest" and heartiest lashes, I find devolved on your friend, the gallant and puissant Knight of Westminster!

Can I, then, pass over entirely this your coadjutor, now my lance is in its rest? I do not know whether Hobhouse or your Lordship wrote the lines quoted in the Quarterly. If Hobhouse did not write these, I find he wrote others, more severe, and therefore I take them as they stand.

"If Pope, whose fame and genius from the first

"Have foil'd the best of critics, need the worst,

"Do thou essay —

"Let all the dullness of a former age

"Perch on thy pen, and flutter o'er thy page;

"Affect a *candour* which thou can'st not feel,

"Clothe envy in the garb of honest zeal;

"Write, as if St. John's soul could still inspire,

"And do from hate what Mallet did for hire."

— — — — —

"If snow-white innocence, that from the first

"Has foil'd the best defenders, need the worst,

"Hobhouse, essay —

"Let all the *pertness* of palav'ring prose

"Froth on thy lips, and perch upon thy nose;

"Affect a virtue that thou canst not feel,

"Clothe faction in the garb of patriot zeal;

"Against king, Commons, Lords, — and Canning bray,

"And do from hate what Santerre did for pay!"

The gallant knight of Westminster and I are now even. I should not have introduced him on the stage, but for your Lordship's specific information; however, though I have thus glanced at him with my parting lance, I hope we shall meet at the next Wiltshire dinner for Charity, with that entire forgetfulness and good humour with which I first met your Lordship, and with which I here drop the pen.

Pope, Lord Byron and mr. Bowles

by

MR. W. HAZLITT.

POPE, LORD BYRON, AND MR. BOWLES¹

THIS is a very proper letter for a lord to write to his bookseller, and for Mr. Murray to show about among his friends, as it contains some dry rubs at Mr. Bowles, and some good hits at Mr. Southey and his "invariable principles". There is some good *hating*, and some good writing in it, some coarse jests, and some dogmatical assertions; but that it is by any means a *settler* of the question, is what we are in all due form inclined to doubt. His Lordship, as a poet, is a little headstrong and self-willed, a spoiled child of nature and fortune: his philosophy and criticism have a tincture of the same spirit: he doles out his opinions with a great deal of frankness and spleen, saying, "this I like, that I loathe;" but he does not trouble himself, or the reader, with his reasons, any more than he accounts to his servants for the directions he gives them. This might seem too great a compliment in his Lordship to the public.

All this *pibble-prabble* about Pope, and Milton, and Shakspeare, and what foreigners say of us, and the Venus, and Antinöus, and the Acropolis, and the Grand Canal at Venice, and the Turkish fleet, and Falconer's Shipwreck, and ethics, and ethical poetry (with the single exception of some bold picturesque sketches in the poet's best prose-style) is what might be talked by any Bond-street loungee of them all, after a last night's debauch, in the intervals between the splashings of the soda-water and the acid taste of the port wine rising in the mouth. It is no better than that. If his Lordship had sent it in from Long's, or the Albany, to be handed about in Albemarle-street, in slips as he wrote it, it would have been very well. But al the way from Ravenna, cannot he contrive to send us something better than his own ill-humour and our own common-places — than the discovery that Pope was a poet, and that Cowper was none; and the old story that Canova, in forming a statue, takes a hand from one, a foot from another, and a nose from a third, and so makes out the idea of perfect beauty! (We would advise his Lordship to say less about this subject of *virtu*, for he knows little about it; and besides, his perceptions are at variance with his theories.) In truth, his Lordship has the worst of this controversy, though he throws out a number of pert, smart, flashy things, with the air of a man who sees company on subjects of taste, while his reverend

¹ Letter to **** * on the Rev. W. L. Bowles's *Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope*. By the Right Hon. Lord Byron. Third Edition. Murray.

antagonist, who is the better critic and logician of the two, goes prosing on in a tone of obsequious pertinacity and sore pleasantry, as if he were sitting (an unwelcome guest) at his Lordship's table, and were awed, yet galled, by the cavalier assumption of patrician manners. We cannot understand these startling *voluntaries*, played off before the public on the ground of personal rank, nor the controversial under-song, like the drone of a bagpipe, that forms a tedious accompaniment to them. As Jem Belcher, when asked if he did not feel a little awkward at facing Gamble the tall Irishman, made answer, "An please ye, sir, when I am stript to my shirt, I am afraid of no man;" — so we would advise Mr. Bowles, in a question of naked argument, to fear no man, and to let no man bite his thumb at him. If his Lordship were to invite his brother-poet to his house, and to eke out a sour jest by the flavour of Monte-Pulciano or Frontiniac, — if in the dearth of argument he were to ply his friend's weak side with rich sauces and well-seasoned hospitality, "*Ah! ça-est bon, ah! goutez ça!*" — if he were to point, in illustration of Pope's style, to the marble pillars, the virandas, the pier glasses, the classic busts, the flowering dessert, and were to exclaim, "You see, my dear Bowles, the superiority of art over nature, the triumph of polished life over Gothic barbarism; we have here neither the ghosts nor fairies of Shakspeare, nor Milton's Heaven, nor *his* Hell, yet we contrive to do without them;" — it might require Parson Supple's command of countenance to smile off this uncourteous address; but the divine would not have to digest such awkward railery on an empty stomach — he would have his *quid pro quo*: his Lordship would have paid for the liberty of using his privilege of peerage. But why any man should carry the rôle of his Lordship's chaplain out of his Lordship's house, is what we see no reason for. — Lord Byron, in the Preface to his Tragedy, complains that Horace Walpole has had hard measure dealt him by the critics, "firstly, because he was a lord, and secondly, because he was a gentleman." We do not know how the case may stand between the public and a dead nobleman: but a living lord has every reasonable allowance made him, and can do what no one else can. If Lord Byron chooses to make a bad joke, by means of an ill-spelt pun, it is a condescension in his Lordship: — if the puts off a set of smart assertions and school-boy instances for pithy proofs, it is not because he is not able, but because he cannot be at the pains of going deeper into the question: — if he is rude to an antagonist, it is construed into agreeable familiarity; any notice from so great a man appears like a favour: — if he tells or recommends "a tale of bawdry", he is not to be tied down by the petty rules which restrict common men: — if he publishes a work, which is thought of too equivocal a description for the delicate air of Albemarle-street, his Lordship's own name in the title-page is sufficient to back it without the formality of a bookseller's; if a wire-drawn tragedy of his is acted, in spite of his protestations against such an appeal to the taste of a

vulgar audience, the storm of pitiless damnation is not let loose upon it, because it is felt that it would fall harmless on so high and proud a head; the gilded coronet serves as a conductor to carry off the lightning of popular criticism, which might blast the merely laurelled bard; the blame, the disappointment, the flat effect, is thrown upon the manager, upon the actors — upon any body but the Noble Poet! This sounding title swells the mouth of Fame, and lends her voice a thousand circling echoes: the rank of the Author, and the public charity extended to him, as he does not want it, cover a multitude of sins. What does his Lordship mean, then, by this whining over the neglect of Horace Walpole, — this uncalled-for sympathy with the faded lustre of patrician and gentlemanly pretensions? Has *he* had only half his fame! Or, does he already feel, with morbid anticipation, the retiring ebb of that overwhelming tide of popularity, which having been raised too high by adventitious circumstances, is lost in flats and shallows, as soon as their influence is withdrawn? Lord Byron has been twice as much talked of as he would have been, had he not been Lord Byron. His rank and genius have been happily placed “each other’s beams to share”, and both together, by their mutually reflected splendour, may be said to have melted the public coldness into the very wantonness of praise: the faults of the man (real or supposed) have only given a dramatic interest to his works. Whence, then, this repining, this ungracious cavilling, this *got-up* ill-humour? We load this Lordship with ecstatic admiration, with unqualified ostentatious eulogies; and he throws them stifling back in our face: he thanks us with cool, cutting contempt: he asks us for our voices, “our sweet voices”, like Coriolanus; and, like Coriolanus, disdains us for the unwholesome gift. Why, then, does he ask us for it? If, as a lord, he holds in contempt and abhorrence the willing, delighted homage, which the public pay to the poet, let him retire and feed the pride of birth in stately solitude, or take his place among his equals: but if he does not find this enough, and wants our wondering tribute of applause to satisfy his craving vanity, and make him something more than a mere vulgar lord among hundreds of other lords, why dash the cup of delicious poison, which, at his uneasy request, we tender him, to the ground, with indignant reckless hands, and tell us that he scorns equally our censure or our praise? If he looks upon both as equal impertinence, he can easily escape out of the reach of both by ceasing to write; we shall in that case soon cease to think of his Lordship: but if he cannot do without our good opinion, why affect all this coyness, coldness, and contempt? If he says he writes not to please us, but to live by us, that only alters the nature of the obligation, and he might still be civil to Mr. Murray’s customers. Whether he is independent of public opinion, or dependent on it, he need not be always sending his readers to Coventry. When we come to offer him our demonstrations of good will, he should not kick us down stairs. If he persists in this humour, the distaste may in time “become mutual”.

Before we proceed, there is one thing in which we must say we heartily agree with Lord Byron; and that is the ridicule with which he treats Mr. Bowles's editorial inquisition into the moral character of Pope. It is a pure piece of clerical priggism. If Pope was not free from vice, we should like to know who is. He was one of the most faultless of poets, both in his life and in his writings. We should not care to throw the first stone at him. We do to not wonder at Lord Byron's laughing outright at Mr. Bowler's hysterical horrors at poor Pope's platonic peccadillos, nor at his being a little impatient of the other's attempt to make himself a *make-believe* character of perfection out of the "most small faults" he could rake up against the reputation of an author, whom he was bound either not to edit or not to injure. But we think his Lordship turns the tables upon the divine, and gets up into the reading-desk himself, without the proper canonical credentials, when he makes such a fuss as he does about didactic or moral poetry as the highest of all others, because moral truth and moral conduct are of such vast and paramount concernment in human life. But because they are such good things in themselves, does it follow that they are the better for being put into rhyme? We see no connection between "ends of verse, and sayings of philosophers". This reasoning reminds us of the critic who said, that the only poetry he knew of, good for any thing, was the four lines, beginning "Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November", for that these were really of some use in finding out the number of days in the different months of the year. The rules of arithmetic are important in many respects, but we do not know that they are the fittest subjects of poetry. Besides, Pope was not the only moral poet, nor are we sure that we understand his moral system, or that Lord Byron understands it, or that he understood it himself. Addison paraphrased the Psalms, and Blackmore sung the Creation: yet Pope has written a lampoon upon the one, and put the other in his *Dunciad*. Mr. Bowles has numbers of manuscript sermons by him, the morality of which, we will venture to say, is quite as pure, as orthodox, as that of the unpublished cantos of *Don Juan*; yet we doubt whether Mr. Murray, the *Mecænas* of poetry and orthodoxy, would give as much for the one as for the other. We do not look for the flowers of fancy in moral treatises, nor for a homily in his Lordship's irregular stanzas. The Decalogue, as a practical prose composition, or as a body of moral laws and precepts, is of sufficient weight and authority; but we should not regard the putting this into heroic verse, as an effort of the highest poetry. That "Sternhold and Hopkins had great qualms" is no imputation on the pious raptures of the Hebrew bard: and we suspect his Lordship himself would object to the allegory in Spenser, as a drawback on the poetry, if it is in other respects to his Lordship's taste, which is more than we can pretend to determine. The Noble Letter-writer thus moralizes on this subject, and transposes the ordinary critical canons somewhat arbitrarily and sophistically.

"The depreciation of Pope is partly founded upon a false idea of the dignity of his order of poetry, to which he has partly contributed by the ingenuous boast,

That not in Fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to Truth, and moraliz'd his song.

He should have written 'rose to truth'. In my mind the highest of all poetry is ethical poetry, as the highest of all earthly objects must be moral truth. Religion does not make a part of my subject; it is something beyond human powers, and has failed in all human hands except Milton's and Dante's, and even Dante's powers are involved in his delineation of human passions, though in supernatural circumstances. What made Socrates the greatest of men? His moral truth — his ethics. What proved Jesus Christ the Son of God hardly less than his miracles? His moral precepts. And if ethics have made a philosopher the first of men, and have not been disdained as an adjunct to his Gospel by the Deity himself, are we to be told that ethical poetry, or didactic poetry, or by whatever name you term it, whose object is to make men better and wiser, is not the *very first order* of poetry; and are we to be told this too by one of the priesthood? It requires more mind, more wisdom, more power, than all the 'forests' that ever were 'walked' for their 'description', and all the epics that ever were founded upon fields of battle. The Georgics are indisputably, and, I believe, *undisputedly*, even a finer poem than the Æneid. Virgil knew this: he did not order *them* to be burnt.

The proper study of mankind is man.

"It is the fashion of the day to lay great stress upon what they call 'imagination' and 'invention', — the two commonest of qualities: an Irish peasant, with a little whiskey in his head, will imagine and invent more than would furnish forth a modern poem. If Lucretius had not been spoiled by the Epicurean system, we should have had a far superior poem to any now in existence. As mere poetry, it is the first of Latin poems. What then has ruined it? His ethics. Pope has not this defect: his moral is as pure as his poetry is glorious". P. 42.

Really this is very inconsequential, incongruous reasoning. An Irish peasant, with a little whiskey in his head, would not fall upon more blunders, contradictions, and defective conclusions. Lord Byron talks of the ethical systems of Socrates and Jesus Christ. What made the former the great man he supposes? — The invention of his system — the discovery of sublime moral truths. Does Lord Byron mean to say, that the mere repetition of the same precepts in prose, or the turning them into verse, will make others as great, or will make a great man at all? The two things compared are wholly disparates. The finding out the 48th proposition in Euclid made Pythagoras a great man. Shall we say that the putting this

into a grave, didactic distich would make either a great mathematician or a great poet? It would do neither one nor the other; though, according to Lord Byron, this distich would belong to the highest class of poetry, "because it would do that in verse, which one of the greatest of men had wished to accomplish in prose". Such is the way in which his Lordship transposes the common sense of the question, — because it is his humour! The value of any moral truth depends on the philosophic invention implied in it. But this rests with the first author, and the general idea, which forms the basis of didactic poetry, remains the same, through all its mechanical transmissions afterwards. The merit of the ethical poet must therefore consist in his manner of adorning and illustrating a number of these general truths which are not his own, that is, in the poetical invention and imagination he brings to the subject, as Mr. Bowles has well shown, with respect to the episodes in the *Essay on Man*, the description of the poor Indian, and the lamb doomed to death, which are all the unsophisticated reader ever remembers of that much-talked-of production. Lord Byron clownishly chooses to consider all poetry but what relates to this ethical or didactic truth as "a lie". Is *Lear* a lie? Or does his Lordship prefer the story, or the moral, in *Æsop's Fables*? He asks "why must the poet mean the liar, the feigner, the tale-teller? A man may make and create better things than these." — He may make and create better things than a commonplace, and he who does not, makes and creates nothing. The ethical or didactic poet necessarily repeats after others, because general truths and maxims are limited. The individual instances and illustrations, which his Lordship qualifies as "lies", "feigning", and "tale-telling", are infinite, and give endless scope to the genius of the true poet. The rank of poetry is to be judged of by the truth and purity of the moral — so we find it "in the bond", — and yet Cowper, we are told, was no poet. Is there any keeping in this, or is it merely an air? Again, we are given to understand that didactic poetry "requires more mind, more power than all the descriptive or epic poetry that ever was written:" and as a proof of this, his Lordship lays it down, that the *Georgics* are a finer poem than the *Æneid*. We do not perceive the inference here. "Virgil knew this: he did not order *them* to be burnt.

The proper study of mankind is man."

Does our author mean that this was Virgil's reason for liking his pastoral poetry better than his description of Dido and *Æneas*? But farther, there is a Latin poem (that of *Lucretius*) superior even to the *Georgics*; nay, it would have been so to any poem now in existence, but for one unlucky circumstance. And what is that? "Its ethics!" So that ethics have spoiled the finest poem in the world. This is the rub that makes didactic poetry come in such a questionable shape. If original, like *Lucretius*, there will be a difference of opinion about it. If trite and acknowledged, like *Pope*,

however pure, there will be little valuable in it. It is the glory and the privilege of poetry to be conversant about those truths of nature and the heart that are at once original and self-evident. His Lordship ought to *have known this*. In the same passage, he speaks of imagination and invention as „the two commonest of qualities. We will tell his Lordship what is commoner, the want of them. “An Irish peasant”, he adds, “with a little whiskey in his head, will imagine and invent more than” — (What? Homer, Spenser, and Ariosto? No: but than) — “would furnish forth a modern poem”. That we will not dispute. But at any rate, when sober the next morning, he would be as “full of wise saws and modern instances” as his Lordship; and in either case, equally positive, tetchy, and absurd!

His Lordship, throughout, his pamphlet, makes a point of contradicting Mr. Bowles, and, it would seem, of contradicting himself. He cannot be said to have any opinions of his own, but whatever any one else advances, he denies out of mere spleen and rashness. “He hates the word *invariable*”, and not without reason. “What is there of human, be it poetry, philosophy, wit, wisdom, science, power, glory, mind, matter, life, or death, which is *invariable*?” — There is one of the particulars in this enumeration, which seems pretty *invariable*, which is death. One would think that the principles of poetry are so too, notwithstanding his peevish disclaimer: for towards the conclusion of this letter he sets up Pope as a classic model, and considers all modern deviations from it as grotesque and barbarous.

“They have raised a mosque by the side of a Grecian temple of the purest architecture; and, more barbarous than the barbarians from whose practise I have borrowed the figure, they are not contented with their own grotesque edifice, unless they destroy *the prior and purely beautiful fabric which preceded*,¹ and which shames them and theirs for ever and ever.”

Lord Byron has here substituted his own *invariable* principles for Mr. Bowles’s, which he hates as bad as Mr. Southey’s *variable* politics. Will nothing please his Lordship — neither dull fixtures nor shining weather-cocks? — We might multiply instances of a want of continuous reasoning, if we were fond of this sort of petty cavilling. Yet we do not know that there is any better quarry in the book. Why does his Lordship tell us that “*ethical poetry is the highest of all poetry*”, and yet that “*Petrarch the sonneteer*” is esteemed by good judges the very highest poet of Italy? Mr. Bowles is a sonneteer, and a very good one. Why does he assert that “the poet who executes the best is the highest, whatever his department”, and then affirm in the next page that didactic poetry “requires more mind, more wisdom, more power than all the forests that ever were walked for their

¹ We have “purest architecture” just before; and “the prior fabric which preceded”, is rather more than an inelegant pleonasm.

description;" and then again, two pages after, that "a good poet can make a silk purse of a sow's ear;" that is, as he interprets it, "can imbue a pack of cards with more poetry than inhabits the forests of America?" That's a *Non Sequitur*, as Partridge has it. Why, contending that all subjects are alike indifferent to the genuine poet, does he turn round upon himself, and assume that "the sun shining upon a warming-pan cannot be made sublime or poetical?" Why does he say that "there is nothing in nature like the bust of the Antinous, except the Venus", which is not in nature?¹ Why does he call the first "that wonderful creation of perfect beauty", when it is a mere portrait, and on that account so superior to his favourite coxcomb, the Apollo? Why does he state that "more poetry cannot be gathered into existence" than we here see, and yet that this poetry arises neither from nature nor moral exaltedness; Mr. Bowles and he being at issue on this very point, viz. the one affirming that the essence of poetry is derived from nature, and his Lordship, that it consists in moral truth? Why does he consider a shipwreck as an artificial incident? Why does he make the excellence of Falconer's Shipwreck consist in its technicalities, and not in its faithful description of common feelings and inevitable calamity? Why does he say all this, and much more, which he should not? Why does he write prose at all? Yet, in spite of all this trash, there is one passage for which we forgive him, and here it is.

"The truth is, that in these days the grand *primum mobile* of England is *cant*; cant political, cant poetical, cant religious, cant moral; but always cant, multiplied through all the varieties of life. It is the fashion, and while it lasts, will be too powerful for those who can only exist by taking the tone of the times. I say *cant*, because it is a thing of words, without the smallest influence upon human actions; the English being no wiser, no better, and much poorer, and more divided among themselves, as well as far less moral, than they were before the prevalence of this verbal decorum." These words should be written in letters of gold, as the testimony of a lofty poet to a great moral truth, and we can hardly have a quarrel with the writer of them.

There are three questions which form the subject of the present pamphlet; viz. What is poetical? What is natural? What is artificial? And we get an answer to none of them. The controversy, as it is carried on between the chief combatants, is much like a dispute between two artists one of whom should maintain that blue is the only colour fit to paint with, and the other that yellow alone ought ever to be used. Much might be said on both sides, but little to the purpose. Mr. Campbell leads off the dance, and launches a ship as a beautiful and poetical artificial object. But he so loads it with patriotic, natural, and foreign associations, and the sails are "so perfumed that the winds are love-sick", that Mr. Bowles darts

¹ See Mr. Bowles's Two Letters.

upon and seizes it as contraband to art, swearing that it is no longer the work of the shipwright, but of Mr. Campbell's lofty poetic imagination and dedicates its stolen beauty to the right owners, the sun, the winds, and the waves. Mr. Campbell, in his eagerness to make all sure, having overstepped the literal mark, presses no farther into the controversy; but Lord Byron, who is "like an Irishman in a row, *anybody's customer* carries it on with good polemical hardihood, and runs a very edifying parallel between the ship without the sun, the winds and waves, — and the sun, the winds, and waves without the ship. "The sun", says Mr. Bowles, "is poetical, by your Lordship's admission." We think it would have been so without it. But his Lordship contends that "the sun would no longer be poetical, if it did not shine on ships, or pyramids, or fortresses, and other works of art", (he expressly excludes "footmen's liveries" and "brass warming-pans" from among those artificial objects that reflect new splendour on the eye of Heaven) — to which Mr. Bowles replies, that let the sun but shine, and "it is poetical *per se*," in which we think him right. His Lordship decomposes the wind into a *caput mortuum* of poetry, by making it howl through a pig-stye, instead of

Roaming the illimitable ocean wide;

and turns a water-fall, or a clear spring, into a slop-basin, to prove that nature owes its elegance to art. His Lordship is "ill at these numbers." Again, he affirms that the ruined temple of the Parthenon is poetical, and the coast of Attica with Cape Colonna, and the recollection of Falconer's Shipwreck, classical. Who ever doubted it? What then? Does this prove that the Rape of the Lock is not a mock-heroic poem? He assures us that a storm with cock-boats scudding before it is interesting, particularly if this happens to take place in the Hellespont, over which the noble critic swam; and makes it a question, whether the dark cypress groves, or the white towers and minarets of Constantinople are more impressive to the imagination? What has this to do with Pope's grotto at Twickenham, or the boat in which he paddled across the Thames to Kew? Lord Byron tells us (and he should know) that the Grand Canal at Venice is a muddy ditch, without the stately palaces by its side; but then it is a natural, not an artificial canal; and finally, he asks, what would the desert of Tadmor be without the ruins of Palmyra, or Salisbury Plain without Stone-Henge? Mr. Bowles who, though tedious and teasing, has "damnable iteration in him", and has read the Fathers, answers very properly, by saying that a desert alone "conveys ideas of immeasurable distance, of profound silence, of solitude;" and that Salisbury Plain has the advantage of Hounslow Heath, chiefly in getting rid of the ideas of artificial life, "carts, 'caravans, raree-showmen, butchers' boys, coaches with coronets, and livery servants behind them", even though Stone-Henge did not lift its pale head above its barren bosom. Indeed, Lord Byron's notions of art and poetry are

sufficiently wild, romantic, far-fetched, obsolete: his taste is Oriental, Gothic; his Muse is not domesticated; there is nothing *mimminee-pimminee*, modern, polished, light, fluttering, in his standard of the sublime and beautiful: if his thoughts are proud, pampered, gorgeous, and disdain to mingle with the objects of humble, unadorned nature, his lordly eye at least "keeps distance due" from the vulgar vanities of fashionable life; from drawing-rooms, from card-parties, and from courts. He is not a carpet poet. He does not sing the sofa, like poor Cowper. He is qualified neither for poet-laureate nor court-newsman. He is at issue with the *Morning Post* and *Fashionable World*, on what constitutes the true pathos and sublime of human life. He hardly thinks Lady Charlemont so good as the Venus, or as an Albanian girl, that he saw mending the road in the mountains. If he does not like flowers and forests, he cares as little for stars, garters, and princes' feathers, for diamond necklaces and paste-buckles. If his Lordship cannot make up his mind to the quiet, the innocence, the simple, unalterable grandeur of nature, we are sure that he hates the frippery, the foppery, and pert grimace of art, quite as much.

Lord Byron, through the whole of the argument, pelts his reverend opponent with instances, like throwing a stone at a dog, which the incensed animal runs after, picks up, mumbles between his teeth, and tries to see what it is made of. The question is, however, too tough for Mr. Bowles's powers of mastication, and though the fray is amusing, nothing comes of it. Between the Editor of *Pope* and the Editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*, his Lordship sits

— — — — high arbiter

And by decision more embroils the fray.

What is the use of taking a work of art, from which "all the art of art is flown", a mouldering statue or a fallen column in *Tadmor's* marble waste, that staggers and overawes the mind, and gives birth to a thousand dim reflections, by seeing the power and pride of man prostrate, and laid low in the dust; what is there in this to prove the self-sufficiency of the upstart pride and power of man? A Ruin is poetical. Because it is a work of art, says Lord Byron.

No, but because it is a work of art o'erthrown. In it we see, as in a mirror, the life, the hopes, the labour of man defeated, and crumbling away under the slow hand of time; and all that he has done, reduced to nothing, or to a useless mockery. Or as one of the bread-and-butter poets has described the same thing a little differently in his tale of Peter Bell the potter, —

— The stones and tower,

Seem'd fading fast away

From human thoughts and purposes,

To yield to some transforming power,

And blend with the surrounding trees.

If this is what Lord Byron means by artificial objects and interests, there is an end of the question for he will get no critic, no school to differ with him. But a fairer instance would be a snug citizen's box by the roadside newly painted, plastered and furnished, with every thing in the newest fashion and gloss, not an article the worse for wear, and a lease of one-and-twenty years to run, and then let us see what Lord Byron, or his friend and "host of human life" will make of it, compared with the desolation, and the waste of all these comforts, arts, and elegances. Or let him take — not the pyramids of Egypt, but the pavilion at Brighton and make a poetical description of it in prose and verse. We defy him. The poetical interest, in his Lordship's transposed cases, arises out of the imaginary interest. But the truth is, that where art flourishes and attains its object, imagination droops, and poetry along with it. It ceases, or takes a different and ambiguous shape; it may be elegant, ingenious, pleasing, instructive, but if it aspires to the semblance of a higher interest, or the ornaments of the highest fancy, it necessarily becomes burlesque, as for instance in the *Rape of the Lock*. As novels end with marriage, poetry ends with the consummation and success of art. And the reason (if Lord Byron would attend to it) is pretty obvious. Where all the wishes and wants are supplied, anticipated by art, there can be no strong cravings after ideal good, nor dread of unimaginable devils; the sources of terror and pity must be dried up; where the hand has done everything, nothing is left for the imagination to do or to attempt: where all is regulated by conventional indifference, the full workings, the involuntary, uncontrollable emotions of the heart cease; property is not a poetical, but a practical, prosaic idea, to those who possess and clutch it; and cuts off others from cordial sympathy; but nature is common property, the unenvied idol of all eyes, the fairy ground where fancy plays her tricks and feats; and the passions, the workings of the heart (which Mr. Bowles very properly distinguishes from manners, insomuch as they are not in the power of the will to regulate or to satisfy) are still left as a subject for something very different from didactic or mock-heroic poetry. By art and artificial, as these terms are applied to poetry or human life we mean those objects and feelings which depend for their subsistence and perfection on the will and arbitrary conventions of man and society; and by nature, and natural subjects we mean those objects which exist in the universe at large, without or in spite of, the interference of human power and contrivance, and those interests and affections which are not amenable to the human will. That we are to exclude art, or the operation of the human will, from poetry altogether, is what we do not affirm; but we mean to say, that where this operation is the most complete and manifest, as in the creation of given objects, or regulation of certain feelings, there the spring of poetry, i.e. of passion and imagination, is proportionally and much impaired.

We are masters of Art, Nature is our Master; and it is to this greater

power that we find working above, about and within us that the genius of poetry bows and offers up its highest homage. If the infusion of art were not a natural disqualifier for poetry, the most artificial objects and manners would be the most poetical; on the contrary, it is only the rude beginnings, or the ruinous decay of objects of art, or the simplest modes of life and manners, that admit of, or harmonise kindly with the tone and language of poetry. To consider the question otherwise, is not to consider it too curiously, but not to understand it at all. Lord Byron talks of Ulysses striking his horse Rhesus with his bow, as an instance of the heroic in poetry. But does not the poetical dignity of the instrument arise from its very commonness and simplicity? A bow is not a supererogation of the works of art. It is almost peculiar to a state of nature, that is, the first and rudest state of society. Lord Byron might as well talk of a shepherd's crook, or the garland of flowers with which he crowns his mistress, as images borrowed from artificial life. He cannot make a gentleman-usher's rod poetical, though it is the pink of courtly and gentlemanly refinement. Will the bold stickler for the artificial essence of poetry translate Pope's description of Sir Plume, —

Of amber-headed snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane, —

into the same sort of poetry as Homer's description of the bow of Ulysses? It is out of the question. The very mention of the last has a sound with it like the twang of the bow itself, whereas the others, the snuff-box and clouded cane, are of the very essence of effeminate impertinence. Pope says, in Spence's anecdotes, that 'a lady of fashion would admire a star, because it would remind her of the twinkling of a lamp on a ball-night.' This is a much better account of his own poetry than his noble critic has given. It is a clue to a real solution of the difficulty. What is the difference between the feeling with which we contemplate a gas-light in one of the squares, and the crescent moon beside it, but this — that though the brightness, the beauty perhaps, to the mere sense, is the same or greater; yet we know that when we are out of the square, we shall lose sight of the lamp, but that the moon will lend us its tributary light wherever we go; it streams over green valley or blue ocean alike; it is hung up in air, a part of the pageant of the universe; it steals with gradual, softened state into the soul and hovers, a fairy apparition, over our existence! It is this which makes it a more poetical object than a patent-lamp, or a Chinese lanthorn, or the chandelier at Covent-Garden, brilliant as as it is, and which though it were made ten times more so, would still only dazzle and scorch the sight so much the more, it would not be attended with a mild train of reflected glory; it would "denote no foregone conclusion, "would touch no chord of imagination or the heart; it would have nothing romantic about it. — A man can make anything, but he cannot

make a sentiment! It is a thing of inveterate prejudice, or old association, of common feeling, and so is poetry, as far as it is serious. A "pack of cards", a silver bodkin, a paste buckle, "may be imbued" with as much mock poetry as you please, by lending false associations to it; but real poetry, or poetry of the highest order, can only be produced by unravelling the real web of associations, which have been wound round any subject by nature, and the unavoidable conditions of humanity. Not to admit this distinction at the threshold, is to confound the style of Tom Thumb with that of the Moor of Venice, or Hurlo Thrumbs with the Doge of Venice. It is to mistake jest for earnest, and one thing for another.

How far that little candle throws its beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

The image here is one of artificial life; but it is connected with natural circumstances and romantic interests, with darkness, with silence, with distance, with privation, and uncertain danger: it is common, obvious, without pretension or boast, and therefore the poetry founded upon it is natural, because the feelings are so. It is not the splendour of the candle itself, but the contrast to the gloom without, — the comfort, the relief it holds out from afar to the benighted traveller, — the conflict between nature and the first and cheapest resources of art, that constitutes the romantic and imaginary, that is, the poetical interest, in that familiar but striking image. There is more art in the lamp or chandelier, but for that very reason there is less poetry. A light in a watch-tower, a beacon at sea, is sublime for the same cause; because the natural circumstances and associations set it off; it warns against danger, it reminds us of common calamity, it promises safety and hope; it has to do with the broad feelings and circumstances of human life, and its interest does not assuredly turn upon the vanity or pretensions of the maker or proprietor of it. This sort of art is co-ordinate with nature, and comes into the *first class* of poetry, but no one ever dreamt of the contrary. The features of nature are great leading land marks, not near and little, or confined to a spot, or an individual claimant, they are spread out everywhere the same and are of universal interest. The true poet has therefore been described as

Creation's tenant, he is nature's heir.

What has been thus said of the man of genius might be said of the man of no genius. The spirit of poetry and the spirit of humanity are the same. The productions of nature are not locked up in the cabinets of the curious, but spread out on the green lap of earth. The flowers return with the cuckoo in the spring: the daisy for ever looks bright in the sun; the rainbow still lifts its head above the storm to the eye of infancy or age —

So was it when my life began;
 So is it now I am a man,
 So shall it be till I grow old and die

but Lord Byron does not understand this, for he does not understand Mr. Wordsworth's poetry, and we cannot make him. His Lordship's nature, as well as his poetry, is something arabesque and outlandish. —

Again, once more, what, we would ask, makes the difference between an opera of Mozart's and the singing of a thrush confined in a wooden cage at the corner of the street in which we live? The one is nature and the other is art; the one is paid for, the other is not? Madame Fodor sings the air of Vedrai Carino in *Don Giovanni* so divinely, because she is hired to sing it; she sings it to please the audience, not herself, and does not always like to be encoined in it; but the thrush that awakes us at day-break with its song, does not sing because it is paid to sing, or to please others, or to be admired or criticised. It sings, because it is happy: it pours the thrilling sounds from its throat, to relieve the overflowings of its own breast — the liquid notes come from, and go to, the heart, dropping balm into it, as the gushing spring revives the traveller's parched and fainting lips. That stream of joy comes pure and fresh to the longing sense, free from art and affectation; the same that rises over vernal groves, mingled with the breath of morning, and the perfumes of the wild hyacinth; that waits for no audience, that wants no rehearsing, that exhausts its raptures, and is still —

Hymns its good God, and carols sweet of love.

There is this great difference between nature and art, that the one is what the other seems, and gives all the pleasure it expresses, because it feels it itself. Madame Fodor sings, as a musical instrument may be made to play a tune, and perhaps with no more real delight; but it is not so with the linnet or the thrush that sings because God pleases and pours out its little soul in pleasure. This is the reason why its singing is (so far) so much better than melody or harmony, than base or treble, than the Italian or the German School, than quavers or crotchets, or half notes, or canzonets, or quartetts, or any thing in the world but truth and nature!

To give one more instance or two of what we understand by a natural interest ingrafted on artificial objects, and of the principle that still keeps them distinct. "Amelia's hashed mutton" in Fielding, is one that I might mention. Hashed mutton is an article in cookery, homely enough in the scale of art, though far removed from the simple products of nature; yet we should say that this common delicacy which Amelia provided for her husband's suppers, and then waited so long in vain for his return, is the foundation of one of the most natural and affecting incidents in one of the most natural and affecting books in the world. — No description

of the most splendid and luxurious banquet could come up to it. It will be remembered, when the Almanach des Gourmands and even the article on it in the last Edinburgh Review, are forgotten. Did Lord Byron never read Boccaccio? We wish he would learn refinement from him, and get rid of his hard *bravura* taste, and swash-buckler conclusions. What makes the charm of the story of the Falcon? Is it properly art or nature? The tale is one of artificial life, and elegant manners, and chivalrous pretensions; but it is the fall from these, the decline into the vale of low and obscure poverty; — the having but one last loop left to hang life on, and the sacrifice of that to a feeling still more precious, and which could only give way with life itself, — that elevates the sentiment, and has made it find its way into all hearts. Had Frederigo Alberigi had an aviary of Hawks, and preserves of pheasants without end, he and his poor bird would never have been heard of. It is not the expense and ostentation of the entertainment he set before his mistress, but the prodigality of affection, squandering away the last remains of his once proud fortunes, that stamps this beautiful incident on the remembrance of all who have ever read it.

We wish Lord Byron would look it over again, and see whether it does not most touch the chords of pathos and sentiment in those places where we feel the absence of all the pomp and vanities of art. Mr. Campbell talks of a ship as a sublime and beautiful object in art. We will confess we always stop to look at the mail-coaches with no slight emotion, and, perhaps, extend our hands after some of them, in sign of gratulation. They carry the letters of friends, of relations: they keep up the communication between the heart of a country. We do not admire them for their workmanship, for their speed, for their livery there is something more in it than this. Perhaps we can explain it by saying, that we once heard a person observe — “I always look at the Shrewsbury mail, and sometimes with tears in my eyes: that is the coach that will bring me the news of the death of my father and mother.” His Lordship will say, the mail-coach is an artificial object. Yet we think the interest here was not founded upon that circumstance. There was a finer and deeper link of affection that did not depend on the red painted pannels, or the dyed garments of the coachman and guard. At least it strikes us so.

This is not an easy subject to illustrate, and it is still more difficult to define. Yet we shall attempt something of the sort.

1 Natural objects are common and obvious, and are imbued with an habitual and universal interest, without being vulgar. Familiarity in them does not breed contempt, as it does in the works of man. They form an ideal class; their repeated impression on the mind, in so many different circumstances, grows up into a sentiment. The reason is, that we refer them generally and collectively to ourselves, as links and mementos of our various being; whereas, we refer the works of art respectively to those by whom they are made or to whom they belong. This distracts the mind in looking

at them, and gives a petty and unpoetical character to what we feel relating to them. When the works of art become poetical, it is when they are emancipated from this state of "Circumscription and confine", by some circumstance that sets aside the idea of property and individual distinction. The sound of village bells, —

— The poor man's only music, (Coleridge) excites as lively an interest in the mind, as the warbling of a thrush. the sight of a village spire presents nothing discordant with the surrounding scenery.

2. Natural objects are more akin to poetry and the imagination, partly, because they are not our own handiwork, but start up spontaneously, like a visionary creation, of their own accord, without our knowledge or connivance. —

The earth has bubbles, as the water hath,
And these are of them; —

and farther, they have this advantage over the works of art, that the latter either fall short of their preconceived intention, and excite our disgust and disappointment by their defects; or, if they completely answer their end, they then leave nothing to the imagination, and so excite little or no romantic interest that way. A Count Rumford stove, or a Dutch oven, are useful for the purposes of warmth or culinary dispatch. Gray's purring favourite would find great comfort in warming its nose before the one, or dipping its whiskers in the other, and so does the artificial animal, man: but the poetry of Rumford grates or Dutch ovens, it would puzzle even Lord Byron to explain. Cowper has made something of the "loud-hissing urn", though Mr. Southey, as being one of the more refined "Naturals" still prefers "the song of the kettle". The more our senses, our self-love, our eyes and ears, are surrounded, and, as it were, saturated with artificial enjoyments and costly decorations, the more the avenues to the imagination and the heart are unavoidably blocked up.

We do not say, that this may not be an advantage to the individual; we say it is a disadvantage to the poet. Even "Mine Host of Human Life", has felt its palsyng, enervating influence. Let any one (after ten years old) take shelter from a shower of rain in Exeter'Change, and see how he will amuse the time with looking over the trinkets, the chains, the seals, the curious works of art.

Compare this with the description of Una and the Red Cross Knight in Spenser,

Enforced to seek some covert nigh at hand,
A shady grove not far away they spied
That promised aid the tempest to withstand:
Whose lofty trees, yclad with summer's pride,

Did spread so broad, that heaven's light did hide,
 Not pierceable with power of any star:
 And all within were paths and alleys wide,
 With footing worn, and leading inward far;
 Far harbour that them seems; so in they entered are.

And forth they pass, with pleasure forward led,
 Joying to hear the birds' sweet harmony,
 Which therein shrowded from the tempest's dread
 Seem'd in their song to scorn the cruel sky.
 Much can they praise the trees so straight and high,
 The sailing pine, the cedar proud and tall,
 The vine-prop elm, the poplar never dry,
 The builder oak, sole king of forests all,
 The aspen good for staves, the cypress funeral.

Artificial flowers look pretty in a lady's head-dress; but they will not do to stick into lofty verse. On the contrary, a crocus bursting out of the ground seems to blush with its own golden light — "a thing of life". So a greater authority than Lord Byron has given his testimony on this subject: "Behold the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Shakespeare speaks of

— Daffodils

That come before the swallow dares and take
 The winds of March with beauty.

All this play of fancy and dramatic interest could not be transferred to a description of hothouse plants, regulated by a thermometer. Lord Byron unfairly enlists into the service of his argument those artificial objects, which are direct imitations of nature, such as statuary etc. This is an oversight. At this rate, all poetry would be artificial poetry. Dr. Darwin is among those, who have endeavoured to confound the distinctions of natural and artificial poetry, and indeed, he is, perhaps, the only one, who has gone the whole length of Lord Byron's hypercritical and super-artificial theory. Here are some of his lines, which have been greatly admired.

Apostrophe to Steel.

Hail, adamantine steel! magnetic lord,
 King of the prow, the ploughshare, and the sword!
 True to the pole, by thee the pilot guides
 His steady course amid the struggling tides,
 Braves with broad sail the immeasurable sea,
 Cleaves the dark air, and asks no star but thee!

This is the true false gallop of the sublime. Yet steel is a very useful metal, and doubtless performs all these wonders. But it has not, among so many others, the virtue of amalgamating with the imagination. We might quote also his description of the spinning-jenny, which is pronounced by Dr. Alkin to be as ingenious a piece of mechanism as the object it describes; and, according to Lord Byron, this last is as well suited to the manufacture of verses as of cotton twist without end.

3. Natural interests are those which are real and inevitable and are so far contradistinguished from the artificial, which are factitious and affected. If Lord Byron cannot understand the difference, he may find it explained by contrasting some of Chaucer's characters and incidents with those in the Rape of the Lock, for instance. Custance floating in her boat on the wide sea, is different from Pope's heroine Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames". Griselda's loss of her children, one by one, of her *all*, does not belong to the same class of incidents, nor of subjects for poetry, as Belinda's loss of her favourite curl. A sentiment that has rooted itself in the heart, and can only be torn from it with life, is not like the caprice of a moment — the putting on of paint and patches or the pulling off a glove. The inbred character is not like a masquerade dress. There is a difference between the theatrical, and natural, which is important to the determination of the present question and which has been overlooked by his Lordship. Mr. Bowles, however, formally insists (and with the best right in the world) on the distinction between passion and manners. But he agrees with Lord Byron, that the Epistle to Abelard is the height of the pathetic.

Strange that such difference should be
Twixt tweedledum and tweedledee.

That it is in a great degree pathetic, we should be amongst the last to dispute; but its character is more properly rhetorical and voluptuous. That its interest is of the highest or deepest order, is what we should wonder to hear any one affirm, who is intimate with Shakespeare, Chaucer, Boccaccio, our own dramatists, or the Greek tragedians. There is more true, unfeigned, unspeakable, heartfelt distress in one line of Chaucer's tale just mentioned,

"Let me not like a worm go by the way",

than in all Pope's writings put together; and we say it without any disrespect to him too. Didactic poetry has to do with manners, as they are regulated, not by fashion or caprice, but by abstract reason and grave opinion, and is equally remote from the dramatic, which describes the involuntary and unpremeditated impulses of nature. As Lord Byron refers to the Bible, we would just ask him here, which he thinks the most poetical

parts of it, the law of the twelve Tables, the Book of Leviticus etc. or the Book of Job, Jacob's dream, the story of Ruth etc.?

4. Supernatural poetry is, in the sense here insisted on, allied to nature, not to art, because it relates to the impressions made upon the mind by unknown objects and powers, out of the reach both of the cognisance and the will of man, and still more able to startle and confound his imagination, while he supposes them to exist, than either those of nature or art. The witches in Macbeth, the Furies in Aeschylus, are so far artificial objects, that they are creatures of the poet's brain; but their impression on the mind depends on their possessing attributes, which baffle and set at nought all human pretence, and laugh at all human efforts to tamper with them. Satan in Milton is an artificial character: but would any one call this artificial poetry? It is, in Lord Byron's phrase, super-artificial, as well as super-human poetry. But it is serious business. Fate, if not nature, is its ruling genius. The Pandemonium is not a baby-house of the fancy, and it is ranked (ordinarily) with natural i.e. with the highest and most important order of poetry, and above the Rape of the Lock. We intended a definition and have run again into examples. Lord Byron's *Concretions* have spoiled us for philosophy. We will therefore leave off here, and conclude with a character of Pope, which seems to have been written with an eye to this question, and which (for what we know) is as near a solution of it as the Noble Letter Writer's emphatical division of Pope's writings into ethical, mock-heroic, and fanciful poetry.

"Pope was not assuredly a poet of this class, or in the first rank of it. He saw nature only dressed by art; he judged of beauty by fashion; he sought for truth in the opinions of the world; he judged of the feelings of others by his own. The capacious soul of Shakespeare had an intuitive and mighty sympathy with whatever could enter into the heart of man in all possible circumstances: Pope had an exact knowledge of all that he himself loved or hated, wished or wanted. Milton has winged his daring flight from heaven to earth through chaos and Old Night. Pope's Muse never wandered with safety, but from his library to his grotto, or from his grotto into his library back again. His mind dwelt with greater pleasure on his own garden, than on the garden of Eden; he could describe the faultless whole-length mirror that reflected his own person, better than the smooth surface of the lake that reflects the face of heaven — a piece of cut glass or a pair of paste buckles with more brilliance and effect, than a thousand dew-drops glittering in the sun. He would be more delighted with a patent lamp, than with "the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow", that fills the skies with its soft silent lustre, that trembles through the cottage window, and cheers the watchful mariner on the lonely wave. In short, he was the poet of personality and of polished life. That which was nearest to him, was the greatest; the fashion of the day bore sway in his mind over the immutable laws of nature. He preferred the artificial to the na-

tural in external objects, because he had a stronger fellow-feeling with the self-love of the maker or proprietor of a gewgaw, than admiration of that which was interesting to all mankind. He preferred the artificial to the natural in passion, because the involuntary and uncalculating impulses of the one hurried him away with a force and vehemence with which he could not grapple; while he could trifle with the conventional and superficial modifications of mere sentiment at will, laugh at or admire, put them on or off like a masquerade-dress, make much or little of them, indulge them for a longer or a shorter time, as he pleased; and because while they amused his fancy and exercised his ingenuity, they never once disturbed his vanity, his levity or indifference. His mind was the antithesis of strength and grandeur; its power was the power of indifference. He had none of the enthusiasm of poetry; he was in poetry what the sceptic is in religion.

It cannot be denied, that his chief excellence lay more in diminishing than in aggrandizing objects: in checking, not in encouraging our enthusiasm; in sneering at the extravagances of fancy or passion, instead of giving a loose to them; in describing a row of pins and needles, rather than the embattled spears of Greeks and Trojans; in penning a lampoon or a compliment, and in praising Martha Blount.

Shakespeare says,

— In Fortune's ray and brightness
The herd hath more annoyance by the brise
Than by the tiger; but when the splitting wind
Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks
And flies fled under shade, why then
The thing of courage,
As roused with rage, with rage doth sympathise;
And with an accent tuned in the selfsame key,
Replies to chiding Fortune.

There is none of this rough work in Pope. His Muse was on a peace establishment, and grew somewhat effeminate by long ease and indulgence. He lived in the smiles of fortune, and basked in the favour of the great; In his smooth and polished verse we meet with no prodigies of nature; but with miracles of wit; the thunders of his pen are whispered flatteries; its forked lightning pointed sarcasms; for "the gnarled oak", he gives us, "the soft myrtle": for rocks, and seas, and mountains, artificial grass-plots, gravel-walks, and tinkling rills; for earthquakes and tempests, the breaking of a flower-pot, or the fall of a china jar; for the tug and war of the elements, or the deadly strife of the passions we have

Calm contemplation and poetic ease.

Yet within this retired and narrow circle how much, and that how

excellent, was contained! What discrimination, what wit, what delicacy, what fancy, what lurking spleen, what elegance of thought, what pampered refinement of sentiment!

It is like looking at the world through a microscope, where every thing assumes a new character and a new consequence, where things are seen in their minutest circumstances and slightest shades of difference, where the little becomes gigantic, the deformed beautiful, and the beautiful deformed. The wrong end of the magnifier is, to be sure, held to every thing, but still the exhibition is highly curious, and we know not whether to be most pleased or surprised, such, at least, is the best account I am able to give of this extraordinary man, without doing injustice to him or others."

LIST OF BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, ARTICLES ETC. RELATING TO THE
POPE-CONTROVERSY

- 1 The works of Alexander Pope, with life and memoir by the Rev. W. L. Bowles. (1806)
- 2 The works of Alexander Pope with notes and illustrations by himself and others, to which are added a new life of the author and occasional remarks by W. Roscoe.
- 3 English Bards and Scotch Reviewers by Lord Byron. (first and second ed.)
- 4 Specimens of the British Poets in 7 vol. by Thomas Campbell, London 1819.
- 5 The Invariable Principles of Poetry, in a letter addressed to Thomas Campbell Esq. occasioned by some critical observations in his "Specimens of British Poetry", particularly relating to the poetical character of Pope. (published at Bath, 1819).
(See vol. V Letters and Journals, pp. 526/536 Murray's edition of Byron's works).
- 6 A Review of Spence's Anecdotes of Books and Men in the Quarterly Review for July 1820.
- 7 A Review of Spence's Anecdotes of Books and Men in the London Magazine for February 1820.
- 8 A Reply to an Unsentimental Sort of Critic, the reviewer of Spence's Anecdotes in the Quarterly Review for October; otherwise to the Longinus of "in-door" nature by One of the family of the Bowleses (Bath 1820).
- 9 Mr. Bowles as editor of Pope (an article in the London Magazine Vol. 2 no. 7 dated July 1820 by L.S.C.).
- 10 The Character of Pope; a letter addressed to the editor of the London Magazine by Octavius Gilchrist; the London Magazine Vol. 2. no. 8 dated Aug. 1820.
- 11 A Reply to the charges brought by the reviewer of Spence's Anecdotes in the Quarterly Review for October 1820 against the last editor of Pope's works and author of "a letter to Mr. Campbell" on the Invariable Principles of Poetry by the Rev. W. L. Bowles; Bremhill, October 14th 1820. (The Pamphleteer no. XXXIII London, 1820).
- 12 A letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles in answer to a pamphlet recently published under the title of: "A Reply to an unsentimental sort of critic etc."

- 13 Observations on the Poetical character of Pope further elucidating the Invariable Principles of Poetry with a sequel in reply to Octavius Gilchrist by the Rev. W. L. Bowles. (The Pamphleteer vol. XVII and XVIII, no. 34. ~~as~~ *Vol. 35*)
- 14 Letter to **** (John Murray) Esqre, on the Rev. W. L. Bowles's strictures on the life and writings of Pope by Lord Byron (Ravenna Febr. 7th, 1821) See Murray, Byron's works, Letters and Journals vol. V, pp. 536/566.
- 15 Observations upon "Observations". A second letter to John Murray, Esq. on the Rev. W. L. Bowles's Strictures on the Life and writings of Pope (Ravenna March 25th 1821) See Murray, Byron's Works, Letters & Journals vol. V, pp. 567/592.
- 16 Two letters to the Right Honourable Lord Byron in answer to his Lordship's letter to **** on the Rev. W. L. Bowles's strictures on the life and writings of Pope, more particularly on the question, whether poetry be more immediately indebted to what is sublime or beautiful in the works of nature or the works of art. (See Appendices,).
- 17 A letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles in reply to his letter to Thomas Campbell Esq. and to his two letters to the Right Hon. Lord Byron, containing a vindication of their defence of the poetical character of Pope and an inquiry into the nature of poetical images and of the characteristic qualities that distinguish poetry from all other species of writing, by M. M'Dermott. (London 1822) 'The Pamphleteer no. 39/40.
- 18 Pope, Lord Byron and Mr. Bowles. (An article in the London Magazine, June 1821 by W. Hazlitt).
- 19 Review of M'Dermott's letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles in the New Monthly Magazine, March 1, 1922. (by Thomas Campbell).
- 20 An address to Thomas Campbell Esq., editor of the New Monthly Magazine in consequence of an article in that publication (Bremhill March 14th, 1822) (The Pamphleteer vol. XX no. XL 1822).
- 21 A final appeal to the literary public, relative to Pope, in reply to certain observations of Mr. Roscoe in his edition of that poet's works, to which are added some remarks on Lord Byron's conversations as far as they relate to the same subject and the author. (In letters to a literary friend) 1825, by the Rev. W. L. Bowles.
- 22 A letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles A. M. Prebendary of Sarum, Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and former editor of Pope's works in 10 vol. in reply to his "Final appeal to the literary public relative to Pope", by William Roscoe Esq. (London 1825).
- 23 Article in the Quarterly Review no. LXIV.
- 24 Lessons in Criticism to W. Roscoe Esq. in answer to his letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles on the character and poetry of Pope. (London 1826).

- 25 What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Being an answer to an article in the Quarterly Review as far as it concerns Mr. Bowles's Edition of Pope and his view of that poet's character. 1821,
- 26 The gentlemen's Magazine Dec. 1820 p. 488. A short letter by „Verax to Mr. Urban" about Pope — Lady Mary W. Montagu, and "a step beyond decorum".
- 27 The Gentlemen's Magazine, April 1821, p. 291, a review of Lord Byron's first letter on the Rev. Bowles's strictures etc.
- 28 The London Magazine vol. 2. 1820. July to Dec. p. 5: a short editorial note.
- 29 The New Monthly Magazine Nov. 1, 1820: a short memoir of the Rev. W. L. Bowles, with portrait.

BOOKS CONSULTED

- Henry A. Beers*: A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century.
 „ A History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century.
Helene Richter: Geschichte der Englischen Romantik.
 „ Byron: Klassizismus und Romantik.
Oliver Elton: A survey of English Literature (1780—1830).
Edm. Gosse: A History of Eighteenth century Literature (1660—1780).
W. L. Phelps: The beginnings of the English Romantic Movement.
H. G. de Maar: History of Modern English Romanticism. Vol. I.
Stendhal: Racine et Shakespeare.
Byron: Letters and Journals (John Murray).
W. L. Bowles: Poetical Works.
Al. Pope: Poetical Works.
 The Cambridge History of English Literature.
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STELLINGEN

1. Bowles's sonnets did much to start the movement that eclipsed them.
2. Pope was pseudo-classic more as a child of his time than from natural predilection.
3. Lovelace's *Astarte* does not prove Byron's guilty relation towards *Augusta*.
4. By many critics Marlowe is called "chiefly a non-dramatic genius". It can be shown from his plays that Marlowe is not altogether so deficient in dramatic technique.
5. Ellis Fermor's attempt to fill up our lack of knowledge with regard to Marlowe's inner life is objectionable. (See: *Christopher Marlowe* by U. M. Ellis-Fermor, Methuen & Co., London 1924).
6. Joseph Conrad's principal books are built up around the kink in character and the moment of crisis.
7. Joseph Conrad's influence is chiefly responsible for the development of romantic realism in the English Novel.
8. The personality of Chaucer is more easily discovered from his writings than is that of most of the poets.
9. William Caxton is by some writers erroneously mentioned among the translators of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*.
10. If we compare the texts of *Arden of Feversham* and the *Murder of John Brewen* we see that in all probability Thomas Kyd was the author of *Arden of Feversham*.

11. Professor Saintsbury is not clear of his meaning, when he discusses accent and quantity in his *Historial Manual of English Prosody*.
 12. Stendhal's definition of romanticism: „Le romantisme est l'art de présenter aux peuples les oeuvres littéraires qui, dans l'état actuel de leurs habitudes et leurs croyances sont susceptibles de leur donner le plus de plaisir possible. Le classicisme, au contraire, leur présente la littérature qui donnait le plus grand plaisir possible à leurs arrière-grands-pères.”
fails to appreciate the true meaning of this literary movement.
 13. Op onze Hoogere Burgerscholen en gymnasia blijve systematisch onderwijs in de Geschiedenis der Letterkunde bij de moderne talen achterwege.
 14. Het onderwijs in handelstaal en handelscorrespondentie moet op onze handelsscholen uitgesteld worden tot het laatste leerjaar.
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